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Tables of the Old Bengali Script*

(on the basis of a Nepalese manuscript of Daṇḍin's *Kāvyādarśa*)

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सहया सगजा सेना सभटेयं न चेज्जिता ।
अमातृको ऽयं मूढः स्यादक्षरज्ञश्च नः सुतः ॥

(Daṇḍin, *Kāvyādarśa* 3.123)

Up to this date script-tables or charts of different varieties of the Bengali script used both in inscriptions and MSS have been published here and there.[1] In practice, however, for purposes other than palaeographic study they turn out to be serviceable only to a very limited extent indeed. Everyone who for the first time has tried to read old documents written in some form of the Bengali script will probably confirm this. Knowledge of the Modern Bengali and Devanāgarī scripts as well as experience in reading other related scripts is certainly of great advantage, but even this combined with the available charts and some studies especially dedicated to the development of the Bengali script[2] is not sufficient for a straightforward reading of the older varieties of the Bengali writing. The reason is that the Bengali script in all its modifications has so many peculiarities that it is practically impossible to exemplify all of them by means of a simple chart. Most of the charts contain only a very limited number of letters - the basic *akṣara*s, a few more peculiar ligatures and the numerals - which cannot substantially contribute to the easy deciphering and reading of an old MS or inscription. Besides this, such charts give examples mostly of the earliest varieties of the Bengali script, so that they lend rather insufficient assistance when dealing with documents written in the later centuries. These examples are taken from old inscriptions of the period when for the first time a Proto-Bengali form of the script has become possible to distinguish as a separate script (roughly speaking around the 11th-12th centuries).[3] The rest of the charts simply represent the Modern Bengali script nowadays used in print.[4]

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* I thank Dr Jayandra Soni (Marburg) very much for checking the English of this paper.

[1] See BENDALL 1883, plate II.1 (MS. Add. 1464), plate II.4 (MS. Add. 1699) and the *Table of letters* at the end of the catalogue; BÜHLER 1896, table V, columns XVIII, XIX, and table VI, column X; OJHA 1971, plates XXXII-XXXVI, LXXVIII, LXXXIII; DANI 1963, plates XIa-XIb; ŚĀKYA 1973, table 65; RAJBANSHI 1974, plates 102-107; SEN 1977, pp. xxiii-xxiv, script charts I-II.

[2] See BANERJI 1919, CHAKRAVARTI 1938, MUKHERJI 1965, pp. 61-96.

[3] DANI's script-tables contain specimens of even older forms of the script used in the geographical region of Bengal between the 4th and the 8th centuries (see DANI 1963, plates XIa-XIb).

[4] See DASGUPTA 1979, pp. 11-31; ZOGRAF 1990, table II, pp. 185-187.

MANUSCRIPT

The script-tables below were at first drawn up for practical purposes and not especially for the sake of a palaeographic study of the script. Although it was not originally intended to publish them, after some colleagues urged me to do so, I eventually decided to free these script-tables from the custody of the computer in the hope that they may prove useful to others as well (*parārthavidhaye* as the poet puts it). With very few exceptions the letters in these script-tables are extracted from one single undated Nepalese MS of Daṇḍin's *Kāvyādarśa* "Mirror of poetry" (MS KĀ). This is one of the Nepalese MSS which I have used for my critical edition of the first chapter of the Sanskrit work[5] and which I further use for the edition of its third chapter. The following are the details about this MS:

REEL NO. IN NGMPP: A 21/21
DATE OF FILMING: 01.09.1970
PLACE OF DEPOSIT: National Archives, Kathmandu (Nepal)
LIBRARY NO.: *pra.* 1585-3 (BSP 2, p. 15, No. 1585-34; SSP, p. 22b, No. 1095)
SIZE: 36 × 5 cm.
MATERIAL: palm-leaf
SCRIPT: Old Bengali (see below)
LINES PER LEAF: 4
NUMBER OF LEAVES: 43
STATE OF PRESERVATION: very good
DATE: undated (see below)
MARGINAL NOTES: there are a few corrections by the same hand and many marginal notes in the form of a short commentary (*ṭippaṇa*); on the right margin in the middle on every leaf the word *śrīḥ* is written and on both margins a decorative element of three small rings and a long straight line is added; pagination is on the reverse side of each folio on the left margin in the middle after the three rings.
BEGINNING:
(fol. 1b[1]) *oṃ namo gaṇeśāya* || *caturmukhamukhāmbhojavanahaṃsavadhūr mmama* | *mānase ramatāṃ dīrghaṃ sarvaśuklā sarasvatī* || [KĀ 1.1]
COLOPHON:
1st Chapter: (fol. 8a[1]) || *ity ācāryyaśrīdaṇḍina⊙ḥ kṛtau kāvyādarśe mārgavibhāvano* (*sic*) *nāma prathamaḥ paricchedaḥ* ||
2nd Chapter: (fol. 30b[4]) || *ity ācāryyaśrīdaṇḍinaḥ kāvyādarśe dvitīyaḥ paricchedaḥ* ||
3rd Chapter: (fol. 43b[3]) || *ity ācāryyaśrīdaṇḍinaḥ kṛtau kāvyādarśe tṛtīyaḥ paricchedaḥ samāptaḥ* || ⊙ || *samāpto 'yaṃ granthaḥ* || *namo bhagavate vāsudevāya* || *śrīḥ* | ||

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[5] See my *Zur Überlieferung des Kāvyādarśa in Nepal und Tibet. Prolegomena zu einer kritischen Ausgabe*. Marburg 1999 (a copy of this MA thesis is available in the library of the Department of Indology and Tibetology at the University of Marburg); a revised and enlarged version of this work is to appear soon in the *Indica et Tibetica* Series (see DIMITROV 2002).

SCRIPT

On the original index-card the script is indicated as "Maithili". This term, however, is only conventionally used there and means in a very broad sense any Maithili or Bengali variety of the script. Thus for a more detailed study of a particular modification of the script such a vague term as "Maithili" proves to be unsuitable and inapplicable. Therefore a more specific designation of the script is needed. However, it is not easy to find an appropiate name, for there is no generally accepted taxonomy regarding the different varieties of the Bengali script used from early times until now. The problem of terminology is just the consequence of the lack of detailed and consistent studies of the scripts used in the documents. It will become possible to classify and designate the varieties of the Bengali script in a suitable way only when enough material has been studied. As this has not yet been done, here I can merely attempt to propose a possible name of the script in the MS KĀ.

The writing in the MS KĀ evidently resembles the Modern Bengali script, but at the same time it is in certain significant respects clearly distinct from it. Therefore, the script in question cannot be called "Modern Bengali". On the other hand, the script in the MS KĀ can easily be differentiated from the oldest forerunners of the Modern Bengali script, known as "Proto-Bengali", so it will be equally misleading to refer to it as "Proto-Bengali". On the basis of a palaeographic analysis I prefer to call the script in this MS "Old Bengali". More specifically one may define it as "late Old Bengali". Alternatively, the term "Premodern Bengali" could also have been applied. However, in this particular case I consider "Old Bengali" or "late Old Bengali" to be more appropriate, for the script in the MS KĀ shows some important old characteristics which are no longer to be seen in later varieties of the script. The term "Premodern Bengali" could be reserved for more recent varieties of the script, that is to say, for those immediately preceding the establishment of the Modern Bengali script. It might be practical to classify the varieties of the Bengali script generally in four groups: 1. Proto-Bengali; 2. Old Bengali; 3. Premodern Bengali and 4. Modern Bengali. Furthermore, within the first three groups "early" and "late" forms of the script may be differentiated. Needless to say, the designations of the varieties of the script have not necessarily to do with the kind of dialect used in the documents. Since this is only a preliminary classification, it will have to await further studies which will permit to refine and define it chronologically with satisfactory precision.

As far as the script in the MS KĀ is concerned, it is particularly important to avoid the term "Proto-Bengali", for it is used by most writers when referring to much older modifications, i. e., protoforms of what later developed into the Bengali script and its cognates of modern times. It will be helpful to recall what sense the various scholars have actually given to the term "Proto-Bengali" and also how they have defined it in terms of chronology. This will simultaneously enable us to get an impression of the early development of the Bengali script, the latter point otherwise being not object of study here.

First of all, due attention should be paid to BENDALL's esteemed *Catalogue of the Buddhist Sanskrit Manuscripts in the University Library, Cambridge* (1883). In his "Palæographical Introduction" BENDALL has made some important observations in connection with the historical development of the Bengali script and besides this, at the end of the book, he has added specimens of some of the MSS together with a table of letters and numerals extracted from them. Ever since its publication as long ago as 1883 this work has rendered considerable service to scholars and still proves useful. Although BENDALL's "notices" were based only on a limited amount of material, especially as far as old Bengal MSS are concerned, and despite the fact that since then much more information has been accumulated, this palaeographic study is still noteworthy. One should remember that BENDALL was in the advantageous position of having at his disposal a number of very well preserved dated MSS of high antiquity. This makes his observations all the more important for those dealing with undated documents.

With reference to two MSS of the 11th century written in Bengal BENDALL notes that "the alphabet employed exhibits hardly any of the forms of what is now known as Bengali writing (as distinct from Devanāgarī), that writing having arisen apparently at the end of the next century in MSS."[6] BENDALL considers the 12th century as the turning point when, according to his conclusion, it becomes possible to differentiate between two markedly individual styles of writing, the one Nepali and the other Bengali.[7] With regard to the latter BENDALL observes further: "From the XIIth century onwards, this writing, though apparently of less antiquity as a separate hand and perhaps on the whole less archaic than the Nepalese, has a stronger claim than it to be considered a separate alphabet: for we have here both letters in more archaic forms than are found in the contemporary Devanāgarī, though these are fewer in number than in the Nepalese, and also original and peculiar local developments and modifications. Again, we have what is more than a passing fashion in writing, like the Nepalese hooked tops, namely a distinct tendency continuously in force and even increasing down to modern times [...]."[8] Fully aware of the limitedness of his material BENDALL was reluctant to discuss the development and modifications of the Bengali writing in further detail.[9]

In the light of these early observations we may return now to the problem of the term "Proto-Bengali". This term was used by BÜHLER, "the father of the science of Indian

[6] BENDALL 1883, p. xxiv; cf. plate II.1 (MS. Add 1464, fol. 128a).

[7] See BENDALL 1883, p. xxvi.

[8] BENDALL 1883, p. xxxv. On plate II.4 a specimen of a genuine early Bengali handwriting from a MS dated 1198 AD (MS. Add. 1699.1, part of fol. 5a) can be seen (see also the facsimile in MUKHERJI 1965). The scribe's name, Kāśrīgayākara, is also known (see BENDALL 1883, pp. 188-190). Characters from the same MS are reproduced on table VI, column X in BÜHLER's *Indische Palaeographie* (see also BÜHLER 1896, § 26, pp. 57-59; cf. BENDALL 1883, pp. xxxvi-xxxvii).

[9] Cf. BENDALL 1883, p. xxxviii.

Palæography"[10] as early as 1896, when referring to a distinct variety of the Nāgarī script as witnessed in the inscriptions from Eastern India dating from the end of the 11th century and especially the 12th century.[11] In short, he describes this eastern subgroup of the Northern alphabets as "mit stark gerundeten, cursiven Formen und sphärischen Dreiecken oder Hacken an der Spitze der Verticalstriche".[12] BÜHLER observes also that "[u]nter diesen Formen des Proto-Bengali sind nur sehr wenige Neubildungen. Die grosse Mehrzahl findet sich genau oder beinahe so in den älteren Alphabeten."[13]

BANERJI, on the other hand, sets the beginning of the Proto-Bengali script at an earlier date and at the same time uses the term in a somewhat looser sense. While summarizing the development of the script after the 8th century, he asserts that "proto-Bengali forms were evolved in the North-East, long before the invasion of Northern India, by the Nāgarī alphabet of the South-West, and that Nāgarī has had very little influence upon the development of the Bengali script."[14] As for the history of the script during the following centuries and the completion of the formation of the Proto-Bengali script, BANERJI comes to the conclusion that "we find the complete proto-Bengali alphabet in the 11th century A.D. In the 12th century, we find further changes, which make the formation of the modern Bengali alphabet almost complete. [...] Very few changes have, indeed, been made in the Eastern alphabet from the 12th century A.D. down to the nineteenth. Such changes, as are noticeable, were made during the 15th and 16th centuries ..."[15] In general, BANERJI puts the varieties of the Eastern script used from the time after the 8th century until about the end of the 11th century under the all-encompassing heading "proto-Bengali", whereas from the 12th century onwards he regards this "proto-Bengali" script solely in terms of its more or less "complete" identity with the Modern Bengali script.

CHAKRAVARTI describes the early history of the Bengali script in a more or less similar manner: "During the 7th-9th centuries, the eastern branch [of the North-Indian alphabet] developed by itself [...]. In the 10th century, it came to be influenced by the Nāgarī [...]. But from the time of Mahīpāla I [(c. 975–c. 1026 A.D.)] onwards, the influence of the Nāgarī alphabet gradually declined and we find towards the end of the 10th century the birth of the Proto-Bengali alphabet."[16]

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[10] BANERJI 1919, p. 1.

[11] In BÜHLER's own words: "Gegen das Ende des 11. Jahrh. finden sich in den Nāgarī-Inschriften des östlichen Indiens so deutliche Spuren der Veränderungen, die zu der modernen Bengalischrift hinüberführen, und dieselben werden im 12. Jahrh. so zahlreich, dass man schon von einem Proto-Bengali-Alphabet sprechen kann." (BÜHLER 1896, § 26, p. 57).

[12] BÜHLER 1896, § 21, p. 45; cf. table V, columns XVIII, XIX and table VI, column X.

[13] BÜHLER 1896, § 26, pp. 57–58.

[14] BANERJI 1919, p. 2.

[15] BANERJI 1919, pp. 3–4.

[16] CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 365.

DANI's approach is somewhat different. He defines as "proto-regional scripts" those regional scripts that "grew out of the differences noticed in the period ending roughly in the eighth century A.D."[17] Within the regional scripts of North India he examines further the writing style current in Eastern India, including here Bengal and Nepal. He maintains that with the rise of the Pālas in the 8th century "certain tendencies" originated that led to the growth of the later Bengali script. DANI, however, refrains from acknowledging the existence of a distinct Proto-Bengali script in this early period. He bases his analysis on six specimens starting with the Susuniyā rock inscription of Candravarman (4th century) and ending with the Khalimpur plate of Dharmapāladeva (8th century), and eventually concludes that "[o]n the whole the style of writing in Bengal starts with certain peculiarities of its own, but later is gradually brought closer to that of the Middle Ganges Valley. Only a few letters point towards the modern Bengali, and as a whole proto-Bengali has not developed. In fact proto-Nāgarī invaded this region and it was long before its influence disappeared and a local style quite distinct from that of the Middle Ganges Valley was evolved."[18] As for the formation of the Proto-Bengali script, DANI seems to indicate that it did not take place before the 10th century.[19]

In connection with the question of terminology the term "Proto-Bengali-cum-Proto-Maithili" also deserves to be mentioned. It was used by ROTH while referring to the script of the undated palm-leaf MS of the *Bhikṣuṇīvinaya* discovered by Rāhula SĀṄKṚTYĀYANA in Tibet in 1934.[20] In a similar way HAHN defines the script of the undated Nepalese MS of the *Vṛttamālāstutivivṛti* (MS VMS) as "a variety of the so-called "Proto-Bengali-cum-Maithili"".[21] In ROTH's detailed description of the script used in his MS, however, it is not mentioned explicitly why he preferred precisely this cumbersome designation. As for the date of his MS, ROTH comes to the conclusion that "[i]n view of the evidence supplied by a comparative study of Inscriptions and dated Manuscripts of the Pāla-Sena age, we can state with confidence that our HS was written in the 11th (latest 12th) century A.D. [...]."[22] Thus this MS is attributed to the same period as for example the Deopāṛā inscription of Vijayasena which CHAKRAVARTI in agreement with BANERJI considers as showing "the further progress of the Proto-Bengali alphabet".[23]

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[17] DANI 1963, p. 109.

[18] DANI 1963, p. 136.

[19] See DANI 1963, p. 110.

[20] See ROTH 1970, pp. xviii-xxvii.

[21] See HAHN 1993, p. 63; the reference to ROTH's description of the script clearly indicates that HAHN intended to write "Proto-Bengali-cum-Proto-Maithili" instead of "Proto-Bengali-cum-Maithili". For a description of the MS VMS see HAHN 1993, p. 63; it was first mentioned in SSP, p. 140b, No. 5187, s. v. *Vṛttamālāvyākhyā*. I am grateful to Prof. Michael Hahn (Marburg) for letting me use his copy of the MS (Reel No. in NGMPP: B 29/31) as well as his own transcript.

[22] ROTH 1970, p. xxiv.

[23] CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 365; for the Deopāṛā inscription see KIELHORN 1892, pp. 305-315.

From the above survey it becomes clear that most scholars use the term "Proto-Bengali" first of all when referring to inscriptions and MSS assigned to the end of the 10th century and especially to those of the 11th century. The same term is also applied to the varieties of the Bengali script used in documents of later date, however in a more general way. Although it is acknowledged that from the 11th century onwards this Proto-Bengali script underwent changes, there is a tendency – especially in the writings of the Bengali scholars – to see already in the 12th century "the modern Bengali alphabet almost complete".[24] The long period from the 12th to the 16th century is regarded as the time of "the final development of the Bengali alphabet".[25] As for the last centuries before the introduction of the printing press in the 19th century BANERJI notes briefly that the "completely developed alphabet has not changed at all".[26]

The attempt to see in the late inscriptions and MSS as many letters as possible identical with the letters of the Modern Bengali script bears the risk of oversimplification. In order to reach a well-founded and justified conclusion about "the final development" of a script used within the span of more than five centuries one needs in the first place to have sufficient material for comparison. In other words, more inscriptions and MSS from the period in question need to be palaeographically studied.

As for the current state of Indian palaeography, SALOMON is unfortunately quite right in noticing that the "documentation of the medieval and late premodern scripts is very sparse; a basic study of later Indian paleography is sorely needed."[27] Despite the work already done, this situation holds true also for the Bengali script. In the light of this it will be perhaps wiser and certainly more gratifying, before attempting a full-scale study of the script diachronically, to begin with a humbler task, namely a closer examination of the script modifications as found in each particular document, i. e., first to study each one synchronically. Only after collecting substantial material for comparative study will it become safe to make sound judgements about the later development of the Bengali script. Without the prerequisite of single studies of MSS and inscriptions any attempt to reach a conclusion about a script that has been used and remodeled for many centuries will be destined to be arbitrary, perhaps misleading and in any case untrustworthy.

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[24] CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 366; cf. BANERJI 1919, pp. 84–85.

[25] See BANERJI 1919, pp. 87–112; CHAKRAVARTI 1938, pp. 366–388.

[26] BANERJI 1919, p. 4; thus also CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 368. As the title of the book suggests, Fiona G. E. ROSS' *The Printed Bengali Character and its Evolution* (Richmond 1999) published by Curzon Press could be useful to consult for the Bengali script used after the introduction of the printing press.

[27] SALOMON 1998, p. 259.

PALAEOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The script-tables given below may be considered a step in the desired direction, insofar as they provide in systematic arrangement a substantial number of Bengali characters as attested in a single MS, i. e., the MS KĀ. The pitiful thing thereby is that the MS KĀ is undated. The most promising way to come to a reasonable and satisfactory conclusion for its most probable date is of course to compare the variety of the script used in it with the modifications of the Bengali script attested in other dated and undated documents. Obviously we should concentrate on material which is palaeographically most relevant to the MS KĀ. Even a cursory glance at the MS KĀ and other documents of the 11th-12th centuries written in the Proto-Bengali script will suffice to establish that the MS KĀ is without doubt of a more recent date, because of its obvious similarity with the Modern Bengali script. Therefore, to define the character and the approximate date of the script in the MS KĀ it will be necessary to compare it with the varieties of the same script as found in more recent inscriptions and MSS.

From the limited number of MSS and specimens of MSS and inscriptions available to me a paper MS of Caṇḍīdāsa's *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtana*[28] (MS ŚKK) from the collection of the Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣad shows the greatest similarity with the MS KĀ. This MS was consulted by BANERJI in his monograph, where also a very good easily legible facsimile of fol. 179b is added on Plate VIII.[29] The same MS was later taken into consideration by CHAKRAVARTI, who in his Figures VI-IX supplied examples of the basic letters as written in this and other MSS. The MS itself was discovered in 1909 by Basanta Rañjan Rāy in the village of Kā̃kilyā near Balabisnupur in Bankura district, West Bengal.[30] It is

[28] The title of this poem is transliterated in various ways: *Sri-Krisna-kirttan, Śrī-Kṛṣṇa-Kīrttana, Kṛṣṇa Kīrttana, Kṛshṇa Kīrttana*. As a matter of fact, we cannot be certain about the authentic title of the work, *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtana* being the title given to it by the discoverer of the MS, Basanta Rañjan Rāy, who also edited and published the poem in 1916. More recently KLAIMAN prepared an annotated English translation of the same (see KLAIMAN 1984; cf. DAS 1988, pp. 332-348). Since Caṇḍīdāsa's work, being "the only surviving pre-Caitanya Vaishnava text in the Bengali language" and "the second oldest piece of literature in Bengali" (KLAIMAN 1984, pp. 11, 14), is extremely important both from a linguistic and a literary point of view, it has often been discussed by scholars (see CHATTERJI 1970, pp. 127-129, 132-133; GHOSH 1948, pp. 38-42; ZBAVITEL 1976, pp. 135-136, 148-154; KLAIMAN 1984, pp. 1-22). Since the appearance of the *editio princeps* the text has repeatedly been published.

[29] The specimen of MS ŚKK in BANERJI's monograph contains the end of Song 22 and the whole of Song 23 of the thirteenth chapter (*Vaṃśīkhaṇḍa*) of the poem. For an English rendering of this passage see KLAIMAN 1984, p. 251.

[30] See BANERJI 1919, p. viii; GHOSH 1948, p. 38; ZBAVITEL 1976, p. 148. ZBAVITEL mentions that Basanta Rañjan Rāy himself gave the information about the discovery of the MS in the magazine of the Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣad. At the time of writing this paper I was unable to get access to this magazine. KLAIMAN, who has had access to a photocopy of the MS, describes it as follows: "about 200 intact pages of a single handwritten, cotton paper manuscript. The numbering of the intact pages indicates that the

regrettable that it is incomplete. Since the concluding colophon - which might have provided the date of writing - is missing, the date of the MS cannot be fixed with certainty. Nevertheless, the opinion in favour of assigning this MS to the 15th century or the early 16th century prevails.[31] Furthermore, the 15th century might be considered as the *terminus a quo* for the creation of the MS, insofar as the 15th century is accepted by the majority of scholars as the most probable time of composition of the *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtana* itself.[32] As for the *terminus ad quem*, it can be determined with approximation only after comparing the MS ŚKK with other dated documents written in a similar variety of the Bengali script. To some extent such a palaeographic analysis concerning this MS has already been done by scholars like BANERJI, CHAKRAVARTI and MUKHERJI.[33] In his arguments for placing the MS ŚKK in the 15th century CHAKRAVARTI compares it with two dated inscriptions from Barākar (District of Burdwan) and asserts that "on the style of the characters" this MS can be assigned to the date of the earlier of the two inscriptions, the one whose date corresponds to 18th February, 1461 AD.[34]

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manuscript lacks two full pages at the beginning; scattered losses also occur in the middle, and an unknown number of leaves are missing at the end." (KLAIMAN 1984, p. 17). KLAIMAN also informs us about the exact circumstances under which the MS has been discovered in a basket in someone's cowshed.

[31] This dating seems to have already been supported by BANERJI, despite his ambiguous statements. At the beginning of his monograph he makes the observation that "the script makes it impossible to assign the ms. to any date later than the 14th century A.D." (BANERJI 1919, p. 4), whereas towards the end of the book he claims that the MS is "certainly not later than the 15th century A. D." (ibid., p. 89). Supposedly referring and reinterpreting BANERJI's first assumption, CHATTERJI mentions that the MS "belongs to the latter half of the 14th century" (CHATTERJI 1970, p. 128). This, however, seems quite improbable. More credit should be given to CHAKRAVARTI, who asserts that "on palæographical grounds the Kṛshṇa Kīrttana must be placed in the 15th century" (see CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 367). MUKHERJI sets 1514 AD as the *terminus ante quem* for this MS (see MUKHERJI 1965, p. 85).

[32] The dating of this poem and the identity of its author have been for a long time a highly controversial matter (cf. ZBAVITEL 1976, pp. 148-149; KLAIMAN 1984, pp. 18-20 with further references).

[33] The script and date of the MS ŚKK have been discussed more than once in various publications in Bengali. At the time of writing only one of these was available to me. I express my gratitude to Prof. Rahul Peter Das (Halle) who drew my attention to MUKHERJI's palaeographic study (see MUKHERJI 1965, pp. 61-96), further to Dr Ulrike Roesler (Marburg) who kindly made for me a photocopy of MUKHERJI's book, and to Mr Tapas Mitra, MA (Marburg), for his help with the Bengali.

[34] See CHAKRAVARTI 1936, p. 21 (with an edition, translation and facsimile of the two inscriptions) and CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 367. The calculation of the dates of the two inscriptions has caused problems to previous scholars (see CHAKRAVARTI 1936, p. 21 with further references). According to my own calculation done with the help of JACOBI's tables (see JACOBI 1892, pp. 403-460), the date of the first inscription dated Wednesday, the eighth of the bright half of the lunar month of Phālguna in the Śaka year 1383 corresponds to 18th February, 1461 AD. The Śaka year given with the figures *netra-vasu-tri-candra* may be interpreted either as 1363 or as 1362. Practically this is not a crucial point, for the same correct date will be reached when one takes 1363 as the current northern year and 1362 as the expired northern year, thus both corresponding to 4561 KY. In the second inscription dated Wednesday, the seventh of the

It will be worth comparing the script of both inscriptions with the handwriting in the MS ŚKK and the MS KĀ. In addition the undated MSS of the *Vṛttamālāstutivivṛti* (MS VMS) and the *Caryāgītikośa* (MS CG)[35], as well as the dated MS of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (MS BC)[36] may also be occasionally taken into account. The changes in style of writing will become even more evident when we compare the letter forms with their varieties as found in the Proto-Bengali script of the older documents, as for example in the Cambridge MS No. 1699 of the *Pañcākāra* (MS P) written in 1198 AD,[37] on the one hand, and as used today in the Modern Bengali script,[38] on the other. For the purpose of comparison and chronological evaluation it is sufficient to analyse only some of the more reliable and useful test letters, which most clearly reveal the variations of these individual

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bright half of the lunar month of Mārgaśīrṣa in the Śaka year 1468, the year should necessarily be interpreted as the current northern year, corresponding to 4646 KY. For this reason it seems more likely that in the first inscription too the current northern year was intended, i. e., Śaka 1383. The date of the second inscription corresponds to 15th November, 1545 AD and not to 29th December, 1546 AD, as CHAKRAVARTI has claimed. I am very grateful to Ms Signe Kirde (Marburg) for providing me with a copy of CHAKRAVARTI's article and also to Dr Karl-Heinz Golzio (Bonn) for a valuable suggestion concerning the calculation of the dates of the inscriptions.

[35] This MS containing Munidatta's commentary to the *Caryāgīti* with the basic text quoted in it is easily available in a facsimile edition (see SEN 1977; see also the specimens of fols. 45b and 46a in MUKHERJI 1965). As for the probable date of the MS CG, MUKHERJI asserts at one place that this MS "in all probability was copied between 14th and 16th century" (MUKHERJI 1963, pp. 7-8), whereas at another place he is prone to assign it to the late 12th century (cf. MUKHERJI 1965, p. 96). SEN is of the more credible opinion that this MS "might have been copied in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century A.D." (SEN 1977, p. xviii). The MS was discovered by Haraprasāda ŚĀSTRI in the Rāj Darbār Library and is now preserved in the National Archives, Kathmandu (Nepal). For a description of the MS CG see s. v. *Caryācaryaṭīkā* in BSP 7.1, pp. 161-162, No. *tṛ*. 402-241 (here the script is erroneously identified as Newārī); SSP, p. 46a, No. 1994; for more details see SEN 1977, pp. xv-xvii; about its language cf. CHATTERJI 1970, pp. 110-118; MUKHERJI 1963; KVÆRNE 1977, pp. 3-4 (with further references); SEN 1977, pp. xxv-xxxix.

[36] For a description of this MS see ŚĀSTRI 1917, pp. 21-22, No. 19, MS 8067. In BANERJI's monograph photos of two pages of this MS from the collection of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (MS Ga 8067) are included (see BANERJI 1919, plates V-VI). According to the information presented there, the pages to be seen are "Fol. 65. obv." and "Fol. 65, Rev." However, from the reproduction, which is of poor quality and hardly legible, it can be established that plate V represents a page of a folio containing the text of *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 10.35b-43ab, whereas the next page certainly does not go on with *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 10.43cd but contains the very end of the MS with the concluding colophon. It appears that the folios reproduced are 65a and 66b. As the colophon informs us, the MS was written at Veṇugrāma (Burdwan District) in V. S. 1492 (1435 AD). It was found by Haraprasāda ŚĀSTRI in Nepal (see BANERJI 1919, p. 90). Characters from the same MS are reproduced by CHAKRAVARTI in figures VI-IX, column VI (see CHAKRAVARTI 1938, pp. 373-375).

[37] See BENDALL 1883, pp. 188-190 and plate II.4 with a facsimile of part of fol. 5a; see also MUKHERJI 1965 with a reproduction of the whole folio.

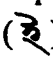
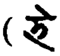
[38] See Appendix II below on p. 75 with a chart of the Modern Bengali script.

letter forms as written by the various hands within a certain period of time. By establishing the preferences for one or the other letter form on the part of the scribes and after taking into account these peculiarities as a whole, we might be in a position to decide whether and to what extent these test letters reflect different stages and transitional periods in the development of the script. On palaeographic grounds it should eventually become possible to arrive at a probable range of dates for the writing of the MS KĀ.

While undertaking such palaeographic analysis based on a number of different MSS and inscriptions written by different hands, it is necessary to consider several important additional factors. Thus, for example, the variation in the writing of a certain letter form is usually and at least to some extent due to the idiosyncrasy and mannerism of a particular scribe. In other words, some of the differences may be simply due to the scribe himself and the circumstances under which he worked. This amounts to saying that established contrasts among letter forms must not necessarily be explained by chronological differences, and that a certain period of time for stylistic variations within the script of the same chronological stage should be allowed. Another factor is the kind of material and tools used in the writing process. Since we are going to analyse both MSS and inscriptions, it is particularly important to mention the basic rule that the form of writing in inscriptions tends to be more conservative than the handwriting in MSS. Or as SALOMON has pointed out, "graphic innovations tend to appear first in handwritten documents and only gradually make their way into epigraphic use thereafter".[39]

With this in mind we can proceed to the analysis of the letters which reveal most significant formal changes. Since the two Barākar inscriptions of 1461 AD (BAR I) and 1545 AD (BAR II) are quite short and because a facsimile of only a single page of the MS ŚKK is available to me, it will not be possible to analyse each test letter to the full extent. Despite these limitations, the material will be enough to demonstrate at least some of the more significant similarities and distinctions among the letters in question.

I

The first letter worth to be examined is the initial *i*. Although this letter does not occur in the two inscriptions, it is important to compare the letter forms as found in the MSS. The initial *i* of the MS KĀ () and the MS ŚKK ( , as in *gāila*)[40] is almost identical. Characteristic of this form is that the lower diagonal line is detached from the main body of the letter and not connected to it, as in the Modern Bengali script (ই). The letter form found both in the early and late Proto-Bengali writing is clearly distinct (cf.  in the MS P).[41] In the MS CG and the MS VMS a further developed variety of the letter

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[39] SALOMON 1999, p. 119.

[40] See BANERJI 1919, plate VIII, lines 1 and 7.

[41] See BENDALL 1883, plate II.4, line 2; CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 369, figure II, columns I–XII.

form can be observed. The gradual unfolding and elongation of the main body of the letter may be regarded as a feature of the early Old Bengali script (ই in the MS CG[42] and ই in the MS VMS, as in *iti*[43]). As for the variety in the MS KĀ and the MS ŚKK, it can be classified as a transitional, late Old Bengali letter.[44]

Ī

The initial *ī* is much more rarely found in the documents. In the MS KĀ there are two varieties. The first (ই) is the same or almost the same as the initial *i* (ই), the only distinction being possibly the form of the stroke over the top line – in the case of *ī* it is a more or less straight line, whereas in the case of *i* it tends to be slightly curved. The rarity of *ī* does not permit to decide whether the form of the line may be considered a distinctive feature. According to CHAKRAVARTI the initial *i* and *ī* in the MS BC are not differentiated,[45] but in the older documents, as for example in the MS P, the initial *ī* is distinguished from *i* by means of a short straight line placed under the main body of the letter (ই).[46] The same principle was followed by the scribe of the MS VMS (ই , as in *īśa*),[47] whereas in the MS CG the length of the vowel is perhaps indicated by attaching a non-initial *ī* to the initial *i* (ইী)[48] or else the initial *i* is used indistinguishably.[49] The second variety of *ī* found in the MS KĀ (ঈ) is the one also used in the MS ŚKK (ঈ),[50] which is identical with the modern letter form (ঈ). The concurrent use of both varieties in the MS KĀ points towards a transitional period in which the old indistinguishable use of *i* and *ī* was in the process of being given up and a new distinct letter form for *ī*, namely the Modern Bengali one, was being introduced. If this conclusion is correct, it may imply an earlier date for the writing in the MS KĀ as compared with the MS ŚKK.

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42 SEN 1977, p. xxiii, column Ia; cf. *lui*, ibid., p. 2, fol. 1b, line 3.

43 See the MS VMS, fol. 1b, line 3.

44 Judging from the two examples of initial *i* in fol. 179a (lines 1 and 7), it is difficult to agree that the MS ŚKK shows the "fully developed form" of the letter (cf. BANERJI 1919, p. 89; CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 376; SEN 1977, p. xxiii, column IIa). Meanwhile it may be noticed that the character given in CHAKRAVARTI's figure VI, column VII does not correspond to the specimen in BANERJI's plate VIII.

45 Cf. CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 373, figure VI, column VI.

46 See BENDALL 1883, plate II.4, line 2.

47 See the MS VMS, fol. 8a, line 6.

48 See SEN 1977, pp. xviii–xix; cf. *payai[saī]*, ibid., p. 21, fol. 11a, line 3; *soī*, ibid., p. 46, fol. 23b, line 1.

49 Cf. *bihariįjai*, SEN 1977, p. 35, fol. 18a, line 1; *idṛśī*, ibid., p. 57, fol. 29a, line 2; *idṛśa°*, ibid., p. 109, fol. 59a, line 4.

50 SEN 1977, p. xxiii, column IIa; cf. CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 373, figure VI, column VII. It will be interesting to see whether this second variety of initial *ī* is used consistently in the MS ŚKK.

U

In the case of the initial *u* it is important to note that in both the MS KĀ (উ) and the MS ŚKK (উ)[51] the letter form without the curved stroke above the top line is used. Provided that CHAKRAVARTI has correctly deciphered the word *uccaiḥ* in the BAR I, one can say the same of the BAR I too (cf. উ).[52] This is in any case the practice in the Proto-Bengali (cf. উ in the MS P)[53] and the early Old Bengali script (cf. উ in the MS VMS, as in *upadiśanti*,[54] and উ in the MS CG[55]). As far as the main body of the letter in the MS KĀ and the MS ŚKK is concerned, it is identical with the letter used in the Modern Bengali script (উ) and already more or less differentiated from the varieties in the older MSS. It must be added here that a variety of the initial *u* with a curved stroke appears already in the MS BC of 1435 AD,[56] which shows that in the 15th century the transition to the letter form as written in the Modern Bengali script may have already begun.[57] This can indicate that the MS KĀ and the MS ŚKK cannot be much later than the 15th century.

Ū

As in the case of *u*, the initial *ū* in the MS ŚKK is also written without a curved stroke above the top line (ঊ)[58], as opposed to the Modern Bengali form with a curve (ঊ). In the MS KĀ (fol. 25a[1]) the word *ūrjasvi* (KĀ 2.275c) is written with an initial letter which is identical with the initial *u*. This is either a scribal error or, less probably, the scribe did not distinguish between initial *u* and *ū*, to some extent similar to the case of initial *i* and *ī*. In the Proto Bengali and the early Old Bengali script the length of the vowel is indicated by a curve attached to the bottom of the initial *u* (ঊ in the MS P[59], ঊ in the MS VMS, as in *ūrddhvam*,[60] and ঊ in the MS CG[61]).

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[51] SEN 1977, p. xxiii, column IIa.

[52] See CHAKRAVARTI 1936, pp. 22, 24 and plate 4, line 11. After the initial *u* (or *ta* and more unlikely *ḍa* or *bha*) there is a ligature which does not look like *ccha* but rather like *rttu* or *hu*. The letter thereafter resembles more a *ca* and less a *ya* (cf. *ci*, as in *ruciraṃ*, line 4; *ya*, as in *priya*°, line 10).

[53] See BENDALL 1883, plate II.4, line 2; CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 369, figure II, columns I–XII.

[54] See the MS VMS, fol. 1b, line 3.

[55] SEN 1977, p. xxiii, column Ia; cf. *eḍieu*, ibid., p. 2, fol. 1b, line 3.

[56] Cf. BANERJI 1919, p. 90 and *ucca*, ibid., plate VI, line 1; CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 373, figure VI, column VI.

[57] However, according to SEN the curved strokes, or "pig-tails" as he puts it, have been attached to the initial *u* and *ū* probably much later. SEN assumes that this remodelling is "a very late phenomenon, taking shape in the late 18th century" (SEN 1977, p. xix).

[58] Cf. CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 373, figure VI, column VII; SEN 1977, p. xxiii, column IIa.

[59] See BENDALL 1883, plate II.4, line 2.

[60] See the MS VMS, fol. 28a, line 6.

[61] SEN 1977, p. xxiii, column Ia; cf. *kiū*, ibid., p. 35, fol. 18a, line 5.

E

The initial *e* has been a fairly conservative letter and its general appearance has not changed much through the ages.[62] Nonetheless, the slight variations in the form of this letter deserve some attention. It can be observed that in the Proto Bengali script the straight or slightly curved sloping line at the top has a point at its left end and the junction with the base line is usually angular and not rounded (cf. এ in the MS P).[63] A cursive modification with a rounded top appears in the MS VMS (cf. এ and এ, as in *eva*)[64] and the MS CG (এ).[65] In the MS KĀ the upper line is more or less straight and ends with a very distinct ornamental hook with the opening towards the base line. The top is still more angular than rounded and reminds one of the proto-form. The letter is not written uniformly, however, and variations are to be observed (cf. এ, এ and এ). In the MS ŚKK the whole upper element of the letter is written circular (এ, as in *ebẽ*).[66] The rounded top is also characteristic of the Modern Bengali form (এ).

AI

The initial *ai* occurs quite rarely but is nonetheless very significant as a test letter. In most documents, where it can be found at all, both in old and more recent ones, it is distinguished from the initial *e* by means of a curved stroke added to the top of the initial *e* (cf. ঐ in the MS P).[67] This is also approximately the case with the Modern Bengali letter (ঐ). A closer analysis is required, however, to decide whether the modern form simply represents an ornamental modification of the older one or whether it should better be associated with another cognate form. The uncertainty is aroused by the observation that in the MS KĀ a peculiar more complex variety is found which may stand in closer relation to the Modern Bengali type. On the right of the main body of the letter a vertical straight line of the same length as the base line is added and both are connected by a short diagonal running from the upper part of the vertical towards the middle of the base line. The marker of the initial *ai*, namely the curved stoke, is then added to the vertical line (ঐ). Of great importance is the fact that a similar peculiar form of initial *ai* with a vertical line on the right of the main body of the letter is also found in the BAR I (ঐ, as in *aiśaṃ*).[68] In the inscriptional letter form, however, the vertical straight line is shorter

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62 Cf. BANERJI 1919, pp. 91-92; CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 377.

63 See BENDALL 1883, plate II.4, line 2; CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 369, figure II, columns IX, XI and p. 373, figure VI, columns I-III.

64 See the MS VMS, fol. 29b, line 6 and fol. 7a, line 5, respectively.

65 SEN 1977, p. xxiii, column Ia; cf. *cīe*, ibid., p. 2, fol. 1b, line 2.

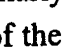
66 See BANERJI 1919, plate VIII, line 4.

67 See BENDALL 1883, plate II.4, line 2.

68 See CHAKRAVARTI 1936, pp. 22, 24 and plate 4, lines 6-7.

than the base line and the connection between them is achieved by means of a diagonal which runs from a little above the middle of the base line towards the lower end of the vertical. As it appears, in handwriting the diagonal and the vertical together with the curved stroke above it must have been written with a single movement of the hand. The initial *ai* in the BAR I can be regarded, therefore, as a cursivized modification of the type with a vertical. Another feature of the inscriptional variety is its curved top. In this connection attention should be paid to the form of the initial *ai* with a vertical as found in the Nepalese MS of the *Amarakośa* (MS AK) which was consulted by RAJBANSHI.[69] There the main body appears to be of the angular type such as in the MS KĀ, however the diagonal and the vertical with the curved stroke above it are written cursively so that in this respect the letter resembles rather the inscriptional variety (). In view of the fact that a cursive variety of the initial *ai* with a vertical appears in the BAR I of 1461 AD, it can be assumed that around the middle of the 15th century at the latest the variety of the initial *ai* seen in the MS KĀ must have already been in use. As for the letter form in the Modern Bengali script, it seems now conceivable that it represents the result of a cursive reduction of the type with a vertical, where the vertical has gradually been reduced until it finally disappeared altogether and only the curved stroke remained.

AU

The initial *au* also deserves attention, especially because the analysis of the forms of this letter might help to explain better the situation with the initial *ai* discussed above. In the documents from the 12th century onwards two forms appear which may be considered subvarieties of a common type. The first subvariety consists of the initial *o* with a curved stroke added to the upper part of the main body on its right side, in a similar manner as the variety of the initial *ai* without a vertical is achieved by extending the initial *e*. This form of *au* can already be seen in the oldest dated inscriptions[70] and is met with here and there in the later documents.[71] The Modern Bengali letter form (ঔ) resembles more this old subvariety. However, similarly to the initial *ai* the Modern Bengali initial *au* might also not be a direct descendant of the old form. This hypothesis is fostered by the fact that a more complex variety of initial *au* does indeed occur in various documents,[72] as for example in the MS P of 1198 AD ().[73] In the MS P the form of the initial *o* is extended on its right side by a vertical straight line of the full length of the main body of the letter and both are connected by a short line slightly slanted. The curved stroke is

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[69] See RAJBANSHI 1974, p. 115, plate 104.

[70] Cf. BÜHLER 1896, table VI, line 14.

[71] Cf. CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 369, figure II, column X and p. 373, figure VII, column VIII.

[72] Cf. CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 369, figure II, column XI and p. 373, figure VI, column III.

[73] See BENDALL 1883, plate II.4, line 2.

added to the vertical line. This is the second subvariety of the initial *au*. Significantly, the initial *au* found in the MS KĀ (ঔ) is almost identical to the second subvariety. An important example is found in the MS AK where a cursivized form of the second subvariety appears (ঔ).[74] As in the case of the initial *ai* in this MS, the short connecting line, the vertical and the curved stroke are written cursively. The vertical had thereby become shorter, though at least in this particular case less so as with the initial *ai*. Even shorter but still recognizable is the vertical of the initial *au* in the MS VMS (ঔ , as in *auṇādikaḥ*, cf. ঔ , as in *aupacchanda*[*sikā*]°),[75] whereas in the MS CG no initial *au* seems to appear.[76] In view of the cursive form of the second subvariety it is tempting to assume that the Modern Bengali type of the initial *au* is the result of a further cursive reduction whereby the vertical was completely eliminated.

It seems justified to suppose that there was a kind of relationship in the development of the initial *e* and *ai*, on the one hand, and the initial *o* and *au*, on the other. The material for comparison available to me is quite limited to make far-reaching conclusions. Despite this, however, with regard to the documents dating from the end of the 12th century onwards it will not perhaps be incorrect to differentiate three stages in the development of the initial *e, ai, o* and *au*. First, at the end of the 12th century the variety without a vertical for the initial *ai* (ঐ , cf. the initial *e* এ) and the variety with a vertical for the initial *au* (ঔ , cf. the initial *o* ও) were in vogue.[77] This may be considered as characteristic of the late Proto-Bengali script. Second, in the following centuries the initial *ai* analogically has also been furnished with a vertical. Thus, two pairs of analogically written letters have been achieved. This is exactly the situation with the Old Bengali script in the MS KĀ (cf. এ *e* and ঐ *ai*, ও *o* and ঔ *au*).[78] In the same period or perhaps only towards its end cursive forms of these letters such as in the MS AK (cf. এ *e* and ঐ *ai*, ও *o* and ঔ *au*) underwent further changes and the vertical, especially the one of initial *ai*,

[74] See RAJBANSHI 1974, plate 102.

[75] See the MS VMS, fol. 5a, line 6 and fol. 38b, line 4, respectively.

[76] It may be mentioned here that SEN notes a peculiar form of initial *o* (ও) in the MS CG (see SEN 1977, p. xix and p. xxiii, column Ia). The only place where I found it to appear is in song 4 (*oḍiāṇe*, see SEN 1977, p. 14, fol. 7b, line 4). Can it be that the scribe wrote *auḍiāṇe*?

[77] As for the form of the letter with a vertical for initial *au*, there seems to be some evidence suggesting that this form itself results from an ornamental elaboration of a still older form without a vertical which resembles the modern type. The curved stroke of this older form added directly to the main body of the letter may have been prolonged downwards which eventually turned into a vertical with a curved stroke above it (cf. CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 369, figure II, columns X and XI). The last step which may have led to the letter form, as we find it in the MS P, would have been the addition of the short connecting line between the main body and the vertical. However, more material needs to be consulted in order to prove the plausibility of this supposition.

[78] Attention should be paid to the fact that this pattern is found in the Modern Oriya script (cf. ଏ *e* and ଐ *ai*, ଓ *o* and ଔ *au*).

became shorter and shorter. In the third and last stage of the development of the initial *ai* and *au* the vertical was completely eliminated and only a more elaborated curved stroke added to the main body of the two letters remained. The result of this development is now witnessed in the Modern Bengali script (cf. এ *e* and ঐ *ai*, ও *o* and ঔ *au*).[79] On the basis of the available material it is difficult to precisely define these three stages chronologically. On the evidence of the MS P the first stage can be assigned to the end of the 12th century and the beginning of the 13th century. However, it is not possible to say when exactly the initial *ai* with a vertical was introduced and regularly written in that way. Nor is it fully clear what transitional forms were used.[80] There is more evidence for the end of the second stage of the development. The cursive variety of *ai* in the BAR I of 1461 AD indicates that around the middle of the 15th century the cursive writing of this letter had already been in practice. For this reason it can be supposed that the initials *ai* and *au* without a vertical have (re)appeared sometime in the second half of the 15th century and around the beginning of the 16th century.[81] The palaeographic analysis of the various forms of the initial *ai* and *au*, therefore, furnishes further evidence that the MS KĀ was most probably written not later than the 15th century.

GA

Ga is not very reliable as a test letter but nevertheless worth mentioning. The variety of *ga* in the MS KĀ has a comparatively archaic appearance (গ).[82] It is quite angular, both the right and the left limb being connected to the top line at right angles. The top line itself is either slightly curved in the middle or straight. The left limb is usually only slightly curved in its lower part, whereas the rest of it is, with a few exceptions, a vertical line parallel to the right limb. The letter form found in the BAR I (গু , as in *guṇite*)[83] is quite similar. In comparison, the variety in the MS ŚKK (গ , as in

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[79] This is also the case with the Maithili script of modern times (𑒋 *e* and 𑒌 *ai*, 𑒍 *o* and 𑒎 *au*; see OJHA 1971, plate LXXVIII). For a specimen of Maithili writing from the end of the 19th century see GRIERSON 1903, pp. 56–58. With the exception of some sporadic attempts at its revival the Maithili script has ceased to be used nowadays. In 1997 a book by Viśvanātha JHĀ entitled *Mithilākṣara abhyāsa pustaka* (Book for practising Maithilī script) was published in Darabhangā by the Akhila Bhāratīya Maithilī Sāhitya Pariṣad (reference from Dr Vinod Mishra; unfortunately I have not had access to the publication).

[80] It is possible that a similar intermediate letter form like the initial *ai* in the MS AK was used at the end of the first and the beginning of the second stage as well as at the end of the second and the beginning of the third stage!

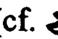
[81] Cf. CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 373, figures VI–VII, column VIII; the initial *ai* and *au* without a vertical are used in a MS of Raghunandana's *Dharmapūjāvidhi*, which CHAKRAVARTI assigns to the middle of the 16th century (ibid., pp. 367–368).

[82] Cf. CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 370, figure III, columns I–XII; p. 373, figure VII, columns I–VI.

[83] See CHAKRAVARTI 1936, p. 24 and plate 4, line 2.

°*gaṇe*)[84] looks more like the letter used in the Modern Bengali script (গ). As far as the right limb and the connection with the top line are concerned, the character in the MS ŚKK is hardly to be distinguished from the letter in the MS KĀ, however the left limb already underwent remodelling. The point of junction with the top line is clearly rounded as in the modern type, and the left limb commences diagonally inwards and then ends with a big curve outwards. A similar cursive variety is found in the BAR II ( , as in *mārgage*).[85]

CA

Ca is also a letter which may be considered to be conservative as far as its general appearance is concerned.[86] It is useful to consider it, however, since in the late development of the Bengali script *ca* has undergone some evident changes and their analysis may supply further arguments for the dating of the MS KĀ. The letter forms found in the MS KĀ and the MS ŚKK are very similar. One can speak of two varieties both of which are found in both MSS. In the two varieties the base line commences from the left extremity of the top line at sharp angle to it, runs at first to the right and then with a big curve turns to the left. In the first variety a straight or a slightly inward curved line forms a sharp angle at the junction with the lower end of the base line and, running diagonally, touches the base line in the middle or a little above it ( in the MS KĀ,  in the MS ŚKK, as in *caṇḍīdā*[*sa*]).[87] This variety resembles the Proto Bengali letter (cf.  in the MS P, as in *vairocanam*)[88] and still more the one used in the early Old Bengali script (cf.  in the MS CG, as in *cañcala*,[89] and  in the MS VMS, as in *ca*[90]). The second variety is only slightly different, insofar as it has a curve instead of the sharp angle at the junction ( in the MS KĀ,  in the MS ŚKK, as in *bacāna*).[91] In the BAR I a peculiar form of *ca* is found, which is comparable to the second rounded variety in the MS KĀ and the MS ŚKK. There the base line is a straight vertical commencing from the right of the top line. At the bottom it makes a big curve and then with a straight or slightly curved line running diagonally the top line is reached at the point of junction with the base

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[84] See BANERJI 1919, plate VIII, line 1.

[85] See CHAKRAVARTI 1936, p. 24 and plate 5, lines 15–16.

[86] See BANERJI 1919, pp. 95–96; cf. CHAKRAVARTI 1938, pp. 379–380, see also p. 370, columns I–XII and p. 373, figure VII, columns I–VIII.

[87] See BANERJI 1919, plate VIII, line 7.

[88] See BENDALL 1883, plate II.4, line 3; cf. however BÜHLER 1896, plate VI, column X, line 20.

[89] See SEN 1977, p. 2, fol. 1b, line 2.

[90] See the MS VMS, fol. 2a, line 2.

[91] See BANERJI 1919, plate VIII, line 2; cf. *bacāna*, ibid., line 3.

line (চ , as in *°candra°*; cf. চ , as in *ruciraṃ*).[92] The rounded variety had taken predominance and during the 16th century the letter underwent final remodelling. This is indicated by the letter form found in the BAR II of 1545 AD, where the left limb had become a straight vertical (চ , as in *°canda°*).[93] In other words the letter was rotated to the right with the centre of rotation being the junction at the top line.[94] As for "the conversion of the left limb into a vertical straight line" and the establishment of the Modern Bengali type (চ), BANERJI points out that this is "an event which happened sometime after the 15th century A. D."[95] From the above it follows that the MS KĀ could have hardly been written after the end of the 15th century.

JA

An interesting observation may be made about the letter forms of *ja* found in the MS KĀ. In this MS two varieties are to be seen, the first one with a short right limb (জা *jā*) and the second one with an extended right limb (জ *ja*). The point of interest thereby is that in the MS KĀ a particular distribution of the two varieties can be recognized. This distribution depends on the immediate surrounding in which *j* occurs. Statistically the unextended form prevails and this is because certain restrictions are imposed upon the usage of the extended form. The extended form, namely, is not used when after it a *dīrghamātra* or a *pṛṣṭhamātra* (of the diacritical vowel of the next syllable) follows, nor when a *pṛṣṭhamātra* (of the diacritical vowel following *j*) precedes, nor when it is part of a conjunct. When a *visarga* follows both letter forms are found to be written. Both the unextended and the extended forms seem to be in use also in the MS ŚKK, however from the material accessible to me I cannot recognize whether there are definite rules of distribution. The unextended form is certainly to be seen on fol. 179b (জ , as in *jagannātha*)[96] in a surrounding which in the MS KĀ would have presupposed the use of the extended form. Judging from CHAKRAVARTI's article, the extended, "fully developed" form of *ja* must also appear in the MS ŚKK.[97] The extended form of *ja* found in the BAR II (জ , as in *janmanā*)[98] can be regarded as a cursive modification of the one used in the MS KĀ. Common to all these letter forms is that the right limb does not touch the top line at the junction with the base line, as is the case with the Modern Bengali type (জ), but

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92 See CHAKRAVARTI 1936, p. 24 and plate 4, lines 2 and 4.

93 See CHAKRAVARTI 1936, p. 24 and plate 5, line 2.

94 CHAKRAVARTI asserts that the MS of the *Dharmapūjāvidhi* has the modern form of the letter (see CHAKRAVARTI 1938 p. 380, cf. p. 373, figure VII, column VIII).

95 BANERJI 1919, p. 96.

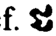
96 See BANERJI 1919, plate VIII, line 6.

97 See CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 380; cf. p. 370, figure VII, column VII.

98 See CHAKRAVARTI 1936, p. 25 and plate 6, line 28.

commences as a horizontal line from the upper part of the base line. As for the Modern Bengali letter, BANERJI asserts that its "full development [...] was completed after the 15th century A. D."[99]

ṬA

The main body of *ṭa* in the MS KĀ consists of two semi-circles and a top stroke connected to the upper end of the upper semi-circle (). Except for the top stroke this letter is more or less identical with the one found in the early Old Bengali script (cf.  in the MS VMS, as in *vikaṭa*°,[100] and  in the MS CG[101]). Judging from the character as reproduced by CHAKRAVARTI and SEN, in the MS ŚKK the upper semi-circle of *ṭa* had almost completely disappeared and a straight base line had begun to evolve ().[102] This variety can be regarded as a transitional premodern form. In the Modern Bengali script the letter has a completely straight base line which is curved only at the bottom and ends with a hook (). Since both the archaic letter with the semi-circles and a variety with a more or less straight base line seem to appear in the MS BC of 1435 AD,[103] it may be assumed that the straightening which has eventually led to the Modern Bengali form may have already begun in the 15th century.[104] This in turn may indicate that the MS KĀ with its older variety of *ṭa* was written before the end of the 15th century, whereas the MS ŚKK with its premodern form may have to be assigned to a date later than the MS KĀ.

ṆA

Ṇa is a very important test letter. Two varieties of *ṇa*, an archaic and a premodern one, can be seen in the MS KĀ. In addition, perhaps a third transitional form should be differentiated. One comes across the first in the overwhelming number of cases. It consists of a base line with two semi-circular curves attached at the top of its left side and opened towards the bottom (). This letter form, which indeed "resembles the modern Bengali letter *la* minus the top stroke",[105] can be found already in documents of the 11th and 12th centuries, if not earlier, and has been in use at least until the 15th century.[106] Similar

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[99] BANERJI 1919, p. 98.

[100] See the MS VMS, fol. 1b, line 4.

[101] SEN 1977, p. xxiii, column Ib; cf. *paṭa*°, ibid., p. 2, fol. 1b, line 4.

[102] SEN 1977, p. xxiii, column IIb; cf. CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 374, figure VIII, column VII.

[103] Cf. °*kuṭumbika*°, BANERJI 1919, plate VI, line 1; see also CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 381 and p. 374, figure VIII, columns VI and VIII.

[104] Cf. BANERJI 1919, p. 99.

[105] BANERJI 1919, p. 101.

[106] See CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 371, figure IV, columns VII-XII and p. 374, figure VIII, columns I-VI.

modifications appear also in the MS VMS (ণ , as in °*pārīṇa*°)[107] and the MS CG (ণ).[108] The same letter form seems to have been used uniformly in the MS BC of 1435 AD.[109] A very similar form is seen in the BAR I of 1461 AD (ণ , as in *phālguṇe*).[110] The second variety of *ṇa* found in the MS KĀ resembles the Modern Bengali form (ণ), however the left limb is longer and not very rounded (ণ). For this reason the second variety found in the MS KĀ may be regarded as a premodern letter form. This variety appears only six times in the MS containing the first chapter of the *Kāvyādarśa*. It is interesting that both varieties are used simultaneously in the conjunct *ṇṇa* (ণ্ণ) and sometimes in *rṇṇa* (র্ণ্ণ besides র্ণ্ণ). In three further cases a letter form appears which might be considered as being transitional, insofar as the openings of the two semi-circles can still be recognized, however the upper border of the left limb gives the impression of only one curve (cf. ণ, ণ and ণ). A peculiar form of *ṇa* is found in the MS ŚKK. Its left limb is formed by a single distinct curve with a bisecting diagonal line in it (ণ , as in *gaṇe*).[111] In fol. 179b of the MS ŚKK BANERJI claims to see two forms of *ṇa*, a transitional form with a bisecting vertical and a final form with the cross-bar eliminated.[112] However, I do not see any difference, the examples of *ṇa* in this folio appear to me to have the same form as the one given above. In terms of chronology the following can be concluded. The different letter forms of *ṇa* occurring in the MS KĀ indicate that this MS was written at the beginning of a transitional period which eventually ended with the establishment of the rounded Modern Bengali letter. On the evidence of the BAR I one may suppose that around the middle of the 15th century this transition had not yet occurred or it had just begun to take place. The transformation must have been made slowly and through intermediate stages. The rounded letter with the cross-bar in the MS ŚKK bears clearer similarities to the Modern Bengali letter and this may indicate that the MS ŚKK was written a few decades after the MS KĀ.

DA

In the MS KĀ the precursor of the Modern Bengali *da* is used. The main body of the letter is formed by two limbs connected at a sharp angle, the left limb being a straight

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[107] See the MS VMS, fol. 1b, line 1.

[108] SEN 1977, p. xxiii, column Ib; cf. *bhaṇai*, ibid., p. 2, fol. 1b, line 3.

[109] Cf. *gagaṇād*, BANERJI 1919, plate V, line 2 and *karuṇāviṣṭā*, ibid., line 4; see also CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 374, figure VIII, column VI.

[110] See CHAKRAVARTI 1936, p. 24 and plate 4, line 6; see also *guṇite*, ibid., line 2. In the BAR II the letter form of *na* is used both for *na* and *ṇa*.

[111] See BANERJI 1919, plate VIII, line 1; cf. *suṇaha*, ibid., lines 1, 3 (twice), and *kāraṇe*, ibid., lines 2, 4.

[112] See BANERJI 1919, p. 101.

inclined line and the right one a vertical straight line slightly curved to the right at its lower end. A short diagonal line commencing from the left end of the top line connects it to the left limb (দ). The thickening at the lower end of the left limb shows that the whole letter was written in a single stroke starting with the connecting line. This letter form may be regarded as characteristic of the late Old Bengali script. In the MS ŚKK a very similar form is used (দ , as in *caṇḍidā[sa]*)[113] together with a more cursive variety of the same with a distinct loop (দ , as in *caṇḍidāsa*).[114] In this connection it should be mentioned that the scribe of the MS ŚKK reveals in general a clear predilection for writing more circular forms and loops. The modifications of *da* in the BAR I (দ , as in *devakulaṃ*)[115] and the BAR II (দ , as in *ṣivapade*)[116] are almost identical to the zigzag form of the Modern Bengali type (দ). The MS BC has a letter form identical to the one in the BAR I.[117] This indicates that the zigzag form had already been in use in the first half of the 15th century. As for the chronological evaluation of the letter form in the MS KĀ it is important to observe that besides the regularly used form of *da,* the older form "with the curved back" (cf. দ in the MS P, as in *devīnāṃ*)[118] still occurs in particular conjuncts. One otherwise comes across this form in the documents until the end the 13th century,[119] but it was probably still in regular use in the 14th century too. In a few other conjuncts the modern zigzag form appears (cf. ন্দ *nda,* ব্দ *bda,* but দ্র *dra,* দ্ব *dva*). It becomes evident, therefore, that when the MS KĀ was written the older form of *da* had not yet been given up completely, the modern form having been introduced only in some particular conjuncts, whereas in the rest of the cases the transitional premodern form was used. It is interesting to notice in this context the letter forms used in the MS VMS and the MS CG. In the MS VMS the letter with the curved back still predominates (দ , as in *ādau*), but in a few rare cases an early variety of the zigzag form may also be recognized, especially in the conjunct *nda* (ন্দ , as in *svacchando*).[120] In the MS CG, on the other hand, a letter much resembling the zigzag form is usually used (দ),[121] however the old variety with the curved back appears as well.[122] This may indicate that the MS CG is posterior to the MS

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[113] See BANERJI 1919, plate VIII, line 7.

[114] See BANERJI 1919, plate VIII, line 1; CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 374, figure VIII, column VII.

[115] See CHAKRAVARTI 1936, p. 24 and plate 4, line 7.

[116] See CHAKRAVARTI 1936, p. 24 and plate 5, line 21.

[117] Cf. *nisīdatu,* BANERJI 1919, plate V, line 1; *gaganād api,* °*dehibhiḥ,* ibid., line 2; *devo,* ibid., line 3; °*ādayaḥ,* ibid., line 4; cf. CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 374, figure VIII, column VI.

[118] See BENDALL 1883, plate II.4, line 2.

[119] Cf. CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 371, figure IV, columns I-XII; p. 374, figure VIII, columns I-V.

[120] See the MS VMS, fol. 1b, line 2 (both characters to be seen here).

[121] SEN 1977, p. xxiv, column Ia; cf. °*āsvāda*°, ibid., p. 2, fol. 1b, line 1.

[122] Cf. *chāndaka,* SEN 1977, p. 2, fol. 1b, line 3; *deṭa,* ibid., p. 12, fol. 6b, line 1.

VMS. It is now not difficult to see how the transitional form has evolved from the older form, namely, by straightening the curved back and transforming the line connecting the main body of the letter to the top line. Relying on the evidence of the dated documents, it can be concluded that the letter forms of *da* in the MS KĀ seem to indicate that, on the one hand, this MS can have hardly been written earlier than the 14th century, since up to this time the older form of *da* had been in use in most of the documents. On the other hand, it cannot have been written long after the middle of the 15th century, as the dated inscriptions and MSS of that time show the universal use of the completed zigzag form.

PA

Pa underwent its most significant changes in the early development of the script, whereas in the later stages it has only insignificantly been modified and refined. In the early Proto Bengali script the letter was quite voluminous and quadrangular.[123] Apparently already during the 12th century a letter form with a smaller head had begun to appear here and there, although at this stage the head still touched the base line at two points, at its upper extremity and somewhat above its lower extremity (cf. প in the MS P, as in *pavargge*, and প, as in *prahara*°).[124] An important change can be observed in the MS VMS and the MS CG. The head had become still smaller and touches the base line only at one point at its upper extremity or slightly underneath it (cf. প in the MS VMS, as in *pratipipādayiṣur*,[125] প in the MS CG[126]). This modification must have been introduced sometime during the 13th and 14th centuries and may be regarded as an innovation of the early Old Bengali script. In any case, already in the first half of the 15th century this hatchet-like letter form of *pa* was in regular use, as for example in the MS BC of 1435 AD.[127] A refined modification of the same letter with fine curvature is to be found in the BAR I of 1461 AD (প, as in *pakṣe*),[128] whereas in the BAR II the head of the letter has a clear-cut triangular form (প, as in *nṛpate*).[129] The same letter form in the BAR I is also used in the MS KĀ (প) and the MS ŚKK (প, as in *āpamāna*).[130] The Modern Bengali type is hardly different (প).

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[123] Cf. CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 371, figure IV, columns I-XI.

[124] See BENDALL 1883, plate II.4, lines 1, 5; cf. CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 371, figure IV, column XII and p. 374, figure VIII, columns I-III.

[125] See the MS VMS, fol. 1b, line 2.

[126] SEN 1977, p. xxiv, column Ia; cf. °*paṅkaja*°, ibid., p. 2, fol. 1b, line 1.

[127] Cf. *pāṭha*°, BANERJI 1919, plate V, line 5; see also CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 374, figure VIII, column VI.

[128] See CHAKRAVARTI 1936, p. 24 and plate 4, line 5.

[129] See CHAKRAVARTI 1936, p. 24 and plate 6, line 2.

[130] See BANERJI 1919, plate VIII, line 4.

RA

In the MS KĀ *ra* is differentiated from *va* by means of a slanting cross-bar. Very rarely the cross-bar is omitted making the letter indistinguishable from *va*. In a few other cases the interior of the letter is completely filled, as is often the case with the letter form used in the older documents (cf. ব in the MS P, as in *prahara*°,[131] ব in the MS VMS, as in *parārtha*°,[132] ব in the MS CG[133]). The main body of *ra* appears more or less triangular but the lower stroke tends to be slightly curved outwards (ৰ). The letter form used in the MS ŚKK is the same except for the feature that the form of the main body tends to be more circular (ৰ , as in *murārī*).[134] The roundness of the letter forms is, as mentioned above, a stylistic feature of the handwriting in the MS ŚKK. In the BAR I of 1461 AD two varieties of *ra* are found. The first variety is not to be distinguished from *va* (ব , as in *hariścandraśya*),[135] whereas the second variety has a dot in the triangle (ব , as in *haripriyā*).[136] The latter is probably cognate with the letter forms in the MS KĀ and the MS ŚKK. In any case, the principle for distinguishing *va* from *ra* by using a diacritic in the interior of the main body of *ra* is the same. However, in terms of chronology it is difficult to say with certainty whether the form with the dot is a somewhat later development, or, on the contrary, that it precedes the form with the cross-bar, or possibly that both forms coexisted. A form with a dot under the triangular, as in the Modern Bengali letter (র), occurs in the Sundarvan grant of 1196 AD.[137] In the BAR II of 1545 AD the letter form with the cross-bar is used (ৰ , as in *hara*).[138] This leaves no doubt that in the first half of the 16th century the cross-bar had already been used as a distinguishing mark of *ra*.[139] One cannot say definitely when exactly this diacritical sign was introduced for the first time, how consistently it had been applied and in which regions. The BAR I indicates that a similar practice for distinguishing *va* from *ra* was current around the middle of the 15th century. Although the letter form with the cross-bar was not taken over into the Modern Bengali script, it has been used in Assamese MSS[140] and survives in the

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[131] See BENDALL 1883, plate II.4, line 5.

[132] See the MS VMS, fol. 1b, line 5.

[133] SEN 1977, p. xxiv, column Ia; cf. *rasā*°, ibid., p. 2, fol. 1b, line 1.

[134] See BANERJI 1919, plate VIII, line 5.

[135] See CHAKRAVARTI 1936, p. 24 and plate 4, line 8.

[136] See CHAKRAVARTI 1936, p. 24 and plate 4, line 10.

[137] Cf. CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 372, figure V, column XII and p. 385.

[138] See CHAKRAVARTI 1936, p. 24 and plate 5, line 18.

[139] According to MUKHERJI the letter with the cross-bar ("peṭ kāṭo '*ra*'") is to be found in a MS of the *Gaṅgākṛtyaviveka* dated 1496 AD (see MUKHERJI 1965, p. 92, fn. 1).

[140] Cf. the illustrated Assamese MS of the *Hastividyārṇava* which was written in 1734 AD (see CHOUDHURY 1976).

Modern Assamese script (ৰ). In the latter script the triangular form with a tiny stroke under the triangle is used for *va* (ৱ).

LA

In the MS KĀ two varieties of *la* can be seen. The first variety is the so called "*ta*-shaped form" (ল , cf. त *ta* in the Modern Devanāgarī script), which is usually used in the MS KĀ. Only sporadically the second and actually older variety with the two curves appears (ল).[141] In some cases the two forms have been used in immediate proximity, evidently without any specific reason for preferring the one to the other. However, it is to be noted that when writing *lu* the scribe had always favoured the old variety (cf. লু). The *ta*-shaped form of *la* is seen also in the MS ŚKK (ল , as in *kule*).[142] The same letter form with an additional diacritic stroke is found in the BAR I (ল , as in *devakulaṃ*).[143] The diacritic stroke had been used probably in order to distinguish *la* from *na*. The BAR II has the *ta*-shaped form as found in the MS KĀ and the MS ŚKK (ল , as in *lupta*).[144] The evidence of the inscriptions of the 15th and 16th centuries can be used for chronological evaluation only to a limited extent. This is because the *ta*-shaped form can already be found in documents of the end of the 11th century. Thus, for example, in the Deopāṛā inscription of Vijayasena both the older form with the curves and the *ta*-shaped form of *la* appear,[145] as in the MS KĀ. The *ta*-shaped form is used predominantly in the MS CG (ল),[146] but in some rare cases the variety with the curves can also be observed.[147] In the MS VMS the *ta*-shaped form always appears (ল , as in *piṅgalā*°).[148] The *ta*-shaped form of *la* can be regarded as a simplified modification of the older form with the two curves. Both the forms coexist in documents of different times and to a great extent the preference for the one over the other in a particular document seems to depend on the mannerism of the scribe. This is of course not to say that there have not been some general tendencies. Regional differentiation may also have played some role. In any case, on the evidence of the BAR I and the BAR II it seems that at that time preference was given to the *ta*-shaped

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[141] It appears only seven times in the MS containing the first chapter of the *Kāvyādarśa*, whereas in the older documents it is the most regularly used form of *la* (cf. CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 372, figure V, columns IV-XII and p. 375, figure IX, columns III-VI).

[142] See BANERJI 1919, plate VIII, line 4.

[143] See CHAKRAVARTI 1936, p. 25 and plate 4, line 7.

[144] See CHAKRAVARTI 1936, p. 25 and plate 6, line 30.

[145] Cf. for example °*līlā*° (line 2) with the older form and °*maṇḍalaṃ* (line 3) with the *ta*-shaped form (see KIELHORN 1892, p. 308).

[146] SEN 1977, p. xxiv, column Ia.

[147] Cf. °*lūyī*° SEN 1977, p. 2, fol. 1b, line 1; *lāhure*, ibid., line 4.

[148] See the MS VMS, fol. 1b, line 5.

form of *la*. In this connection it might be interesting to note that this form has been preserved in the Maithili script of modern times,[149] whereas the form with the curves has survived in the Modern Bengali script (ল). In the Modern Oriya script too a modification of the letter with the curves is used (ଲ).

ŚA

In the MS KĀ two slightly different varieties of *śa* appear. The variety that is less often used has a somewhat curved top line attached to the upper part of the base line at its left. What appears as two small filled circles, ellipses or thicker strokes are joined to the left extremity of the top line by means of another short line (श). The same letter form is found in the MS ŚKK (श , as in *bāṃśī*).[150] In the latter MS sometimes a loop can be seen (श , as in *śata*).[151] The main body of the second variety of *śa* which is more often used in the MS KĀ consists of two semi-circles or curves which are joined together and opened on the left and right respectively. The upper extremity of the bigger semi-circle that is opened on the right is joined to the upper part of the base line (श). Characteristic of this letter form is that the lower extremities of the semi-circles, especially of the left one, appear to be thicker. This variety can be compared to the form occurring in the MS AK (श)[152] which may be regarded as a cursive modification of the former. In the BAR I almost the same letter with an additional curve is used. In three cases the two loops are to be seen distinctly (श , as in *aiśaṃ*),[153] however the letter is once written without loops and seems to be more similar to the second variety in the MS KĀ (cf. श्रि *śri*, as in *bhūriśriyo*).[154] The inscriptional variety with its additional curve resembles the letter form found in the MS CG (श).[155] With regard to the final development of *śa*, BANERJI points out that it "was not complete till the expiry of the 15th century".[156] This conclusion is partly based on the fact that in the MS BC of 1435 AD an older form of *śa* with two semi-circles each opened to the bottom is still used.[157] The archaic variety is also used by the

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[149] Cf. OJHA 1971, plate LXXVIII.

[150] See BANERJI 1919, plate VIII, line 3; cf. CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 375, figure IX, column VII.

[151] See BANERJI 1919, plate VIII, line 6.

[152] See RAJBANSHI 1974, plate 103.

[153] See CHAKRAVARTI 1936, p. 24 and plate 4, lines 6–7, cf. *hariścandraśya*, ibid., line 8 and *bhūśakrasya*, ibid., lines 9–10.

[154] See CHAKRAVARTI 1936, p. 24 and plate 4, line 9.

[155] SEN 1977, p. xxiv, column Ia; cf. *śraddhā°*, ibid., p. 2, fol. 1b, line 1.

[156] BANERJI 1919, p. 110.

[157] Cf. *śudi* and *śubhaṃ*, BANERJI 1919, plate VI, line 3; see also CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 375, figure IX, column VI.

scribe of the MS VMS (শ , as in °*śarīra*°).[158] As for the letter forms of *śa* in the MS KĀ, it can be concluded on the basis of the evidence of the BAR I that a form similar to the second variety in the MS KĀ was already in use around the middle of the 15th century. It is the latter form that mostly resembles the Modern Bengali letter (শ).[159]

ṢA

Ṣa is neither reliable nor particularly helpful for chronological evaluation. Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning that the letter forms used in the MS KĀ and the MS ŚKK are almost identical and differ from the Modern Bengali form in one respect. The difference concerns the lower limb which in the Modern Bengali letter is a straight line joined at an acute angle to the lower end of the base line and the left limb (ষ). In both the MSS the lower limb is, however, still an outward curve, somewhat more explicit in the MS ŚKK (ষ , as in *ṣola*)[160] than in the MS KĀ (ষ). The letter form in the BAR I is still slightly curved at the bottom (ষ). In the BAR II, on the other hand, a more angular form appears whose lower line is actually inwardly curved, but not rounded at both its ends (ষি *ṣi*, as in *ṣivapade*).[161] This variety is therefore closer to the modern letter form.

HA

The last letter deserving attention here is *ha*. The letter forms used in the MS KĀ (হ) and the MS ŚKK (হ , as in *hāthe*)[162] are virtually the same. The only feature that makes this form distinct from the Modern Bengali letter (হ) is the lower stroke which is detached from the main body of the letter, as is the case with initial *i*. It is important to note that in the MS BC of 1435 AD the transitional form of *ha* is still to be found,[163] resembling more the letter form used in the older documents (cf. হ in the MS P, as in *prahara*°).[164] The same letter appears in the MS VMS (হ , as in *ihā*°)[165] and in the MS CG

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[158] See the MS VMS, fol. 1b, line 2.

[159] In contrast to the Modern Bengali letter which evidently has evolved from the variety with the two small circles, the letter forms of *śa* in the Modern Oriya script (ଶ) and in the Maithili script (শ) seem to go back to the older form of *śa* as found in the MS BC and other earlier documents.

[160] See BANERJI 1919, plate VIII, line 6.

[161] See CHAKRAVARTI 1936, p. 24 and plate 5, line 21.

[162] See BANERJI 1919, plate VIII, line 6.

[163] Cf. °*dehibhiḥ*, BANERJI 1919, plate V, line 2; see also CHAKRAVARTI 1938, p. 375, figure IX, column VI.

[164] See BENDALL 1883, plate II.4, line 5.

[165] See the MS VMS, fol. 1b, line 1.

().[166] On the basis of this evidence in the MS BC BANERJI asserts that "[t]he development of this letter was not complete even in the middle of the 15th century A.D."[167] However, a form almost identical with the modern letter appears already in the BAR I of 1461 AD ( , as in *haripriyā*).[168] A very similar, even more cursively written variety can be seen in the BAR II ( , as in *hari°*).[169] The variety found in the BAR I and the BAR II can be regarded as a cursive modification of the letter form with the detached stroke as found in the MS KĀ and the MS ŚKK. This may indicate that both MSS were written neither much earlier than the middle of the 15th century nor later than the middle of the 16th century.

DATING

The above palaeographic analysis provides a number of arguments which, when taken together, point to the end of the 15th century as the latest probable date for the MS KĀ. As for the absolute lower limit, there can be no doubt that this MS was written after the 12th century. Thus, it can be assumed with a fair degree of certainty that the MS KĀ was composed sometime between the 13th and 15th centuries. For lack of sufficient dated documents of the 13th and especially of the 14th centuries it is difficult to determine with adequate precision the *terminus a quo*. There are nonetheless some indications which make an early dating improbable, if not impossible. Significant similarities with the style of writing as witnessed in dated documents of the 15th and 16th centuries, on the one hand, and clear distinctions between the handwriting of the MS KĀ and the varieties of the late Proto-Bengali script used in the documents composed at the end of 12th century, on the other hand, suggest that the MS KĀ was written rather sometime during the second half of the proposed period. This assumption is supported by the fact of the evident resemblance concerning the ductus and tenor of the writing of the MS KĀ and the MS ŚKK. The common features can be explained most plausibly as being due to the comparatively short interval of time between composition of the two MSS. Since the 15th century can more or less safely be considered as the *terminus a quo* of the MS ŚKK, it follows that the MS KĀ should be placed neither much earlier nor much later. For this reason it is justified to exclude the 13th century and most of the 14th century as the possible dating of the MS KĀ. Of considerable importance is the fact that in some respects the handwriting used in the MS KĀ points to being transitional in style. The

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[166] SEN 1977, p. xxiv, column Ia; cf. *kāhi*, ibid., p. 2, fol. 1b, line 3.

[167] BANERJI 1919, p. 112.

[168] See CHAKRAVARTI 1936, p. 24 and plate 4, line 10.

[169] Cf. CHAKRAVARTI 1936, p. 24 and plate 6, line 28; the top line of *ha* is missing only in this particular case.

transitional nature of the writing becomes evident when letter forms used in the MS KĀ are compared to the varieties seen in documents written up to 1435 AD (the date of the MS BC), on the one hand, and to the characters occurring in documents after 1461 AD (the date of the BAR I) and in the Modern Bengali script, on the other. The comparison shows that in particular cases in the MS KĀ older forms and precursors of the modern form of one and the same letter appear side by side, whereby the former usually prevail. Some ligatures appear to be especially conservative. On these palaeographic grounds it becomes possible to narrow down the probable range of dates for the MS KĀ to the end of the 14th century and the first half of the 15th century. The end of this period, i. e., the middle of the 15th century, seems to me the most likely period, when the MS might have been written.

With regard to the MS ŚKK, it can be concluded that a comparison with the MS KĀ has revealed that, besides identical and very similar forms, the MS ŚKK contains also characters which resemble more the modern letters. For this reason it seems appropriate to classify the script of the MS ŚKK as being early Premodern Bengali and distinct from the late Old Bengali script of the MS KĀ.[170] In view of the above considerations it appears most reasonable to assume that the MS ŚKK was prepared sometime in the second half of the 15th century or in the early 16th century.

As for the other two undated MSS that have been consulted here, it is beyond any doubt that both the MS VMS and the MS CG were copied earlier than the MS KĀ. The *terminus a quo* of the MS VMS is given by the date of Jñānaśrīmitra, the author of the *Vṛttamālāstuti*, and Śākyarakṣita, the commentator of the same work. As HAHN has shown, Jñānaśrīmitra almost certainly worked in the first half of the 11th century, whereas Śākyarakṣita was active probably sometime between 1050 and 1150 AD.[171] Since the MS VMS is certainly not an autograph and was written probably after Śākyarakṣita's time of life, the end of the 12th century can be safely taken as its earliest possible date. The *terminus a quo* of the MS CG is more difficult to determine, because the date of the *Caryāgīti* and its commentator Munidatta cannot be established with complete certainty.

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[170] It might be helpful to mention that at the end of his book MUKHERJI has also included good specimens of various MSS dating from the end of the 15th and the 16th century, namely of the *Dharmaratna* of 1489 AD, the *Mitākṣarā* of 1506 AD, the *Śiśupālavadha* of 1511 AD, the *Śūdrapaddhati* of 1514 AD and the *Abhijñānaśākuntala* of 1571 AD (see MUKHERJI 1965). The modifications of the script used in these MSS have a great number of similarities and I am inclined to classifying all of them as forms of the Premodern Bengali script. A detailed study of these premodern varieties will certainly permit to get a clearer picture of the late development of the Bengali script. In this context it will be useful also to consult the specimens of the "ältere Bengali-Schrift" ("older Bengali script", i. e., early Premodern Bengali) and the "jüngere Bengali-Schrift" ("younger Bengali script", perhaps better late Premodern Bengali) in JANERTs *Indische Handschriften* (see JANERT 1962, tables II-V).

[171] See HAHN 1971, pp. 5-8 and HAHN 1993, pp. 63-64.

Nonetheless, since Munidatta is supposed to have lived in the 13th century and surely not later than the first quarter of the 14th century,[172] the 13th century may be assumed as the earliest possible date of the MS CG. The analysis permits one to establish considerable palaeographic similarities between the MS VMS and the MS CG. On the whole, their script may be classified as early Old Bengali. The comparison with other dated documents allows one to limit the probable range of time for the MS VMS and the MS CG to between the 13th and the early 15th centuries. Furthermore, since some letter forms in the MS CG suggest its posteriority to the MS VMS, it might be justified to assign the MS VMS to the 13th-14th centuries, on the one hand, and the MS CG to the late 13th - early 15th centuries, on the other. Be that as it may, more palaeographic material is needed in order to date these MSS with greater certainty and precision.

SCRIPT-TABLES

The original impetus for drawing up the script-tables below was given by the marginal text found throughout the MS KĀ, which represents a short commentary (*ṭippaṇa*) to Daṇḍin's *Kāvyādarśa*. Since it is written in quite small letters, it was often very difficult and in some cases impossible to decipher. The identification of the tiny and not seldom tantalizingly illegible letters proved to be time-consuming. This led to the idea that only detailed script-tables with letters extracted from the beautifully and clearly written basic text will guarantee a more pleasant and fruitful work with the marginal notes. The overwhelming number of the letters was extracted from the first eight folios of the MS containing the text of the comparatively short first chapter of the *Kāvyādarśa*.[173] In a few cases letters were extracted from the folios containing the text of the second and the third chapter of the same work. Only a couple of rare basic letters of which the MS KĀ did not contain examples were borrowed from RAJBANSHI's plates 102-103.[174] It must also be mentioned that besides specimens of well written letters some negligently written ones have deliberately been taken, the aim being to make the user of the script-tables aware of possible variations and deteriorations in the writing.

[172] See KVAERNE 1977, pp. 2, 5-7 with further references.

[173] It consists of only 105 stanzas of which 1-103 are in the *Anuṣṭubh* metre and the last two in the *Vaṃśastha* metre.

[174] In the script-tables these letters are marked with an asterisk; cf. RAJBANSHI 1974, pp. 115-117, plates 102-104. The letters given in these plates have been extracted from a Nepalese MS of the *Amarakośa* (National Library, Nr. 3258). As has been indicated above, judging from the letters in RAJBANSHI's plates, the script of this MS appears to resemble considerably the script of the MS KĀ. Unfortunately I have not been able to acquire further information about this MS.

A few words need to be said about the arrangement of the letters. Since the original intention was to use the script-tables for quick reference, it was important to arrange the letters in a logical and systematic way. For this purpose a special system of arrangement was developed, dividing the script-tables into six groups:

1. The first group contains the basic letters, i. e., the vowels as written in initial position, the consonants with the inherent *-a* and the numerals from zero to nine.
2. The second group has a large number of conjunct consonants. It is important to notice here that the point of orientation is the last consonant of the conjunct, even if a semi-vowel follows it. The arrangement is made then with regard to the phonetic nature of this last consonant, starting with the velars, palatals and so on. There is a subgroup for the conjuncts with a following nasal (again starting with the velar nasal and ending with the labial), a subgroup for the conjuncts with a following semi-vowel and a subgroup for the conjuncts with a following sibilant. At the end of the second group examples of conjuncts with geminates are given. For the sake of consistency some conjuncts with at least three consonants have been cited in more than one subgroup. Since in this script *ba* and *va* are used indistinguishably, out of convenience all conjuncts are given with *v* even if in a particular case *b* is to be read.
3. The third group contains examples of diacritic vowels. Each example represents an open syllable with the structure consonant-vowel. Here the point of orientation is the vowel. Thus, first come open syllables with *-ā*, then with *-i* etc. until those with *-au*.
4. In the fourth group examples of *anusvāra, visarga, avagraha* and a few other symbols are put together.
5. The fifth group contains specimens of letters which are more or less easily confused with each other. For obvious reasons it was not possible to arrange the letters in a strict logical order.
6. The sixth group contains all the characters of groups 1-5 (without the numerals) in a strict alphabetical order. Here all conjuncts are arranged according to their first consonant. This holds true also of the examples of the diacritic vowels, where in this case the consonant is taken into consideration first.

Thus, for example, *kṣa* will be found in § 2.8.2 (because of the following *-ṣ-*) as well as in § 6 under K; *pu* will be found in § 3.4 (because of the diacritic vowel *-u*) and in § 6 under P; in the more rare cases a conjunct such as *rmma* will be found at more than two places: in § 2.6.4 (because of the following nasal *-m-*), in § 2.9 (because of the geminate *-mm-*) and in § 6 under R; similarly *tsna* is given in § 2.6.3 (because of the following *-n-*), in § 2.8.3 (because of the following *-s-*) and in § 6 under T.

CONTENTS OF THE SCRIPT-TABLES

1. Basic Letters

1.1 Initial Vowels



a ā i ī u ū ṛ e ai o au

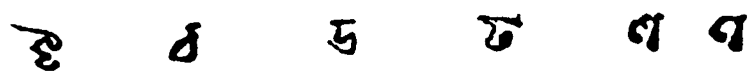
1.2 Consonants



ka kha ga gha ṅa



ca cha ja jha ña



ṭa ṭha ḍa ḍha ṇa



ta tha da dha na



pa pha ba bha ma

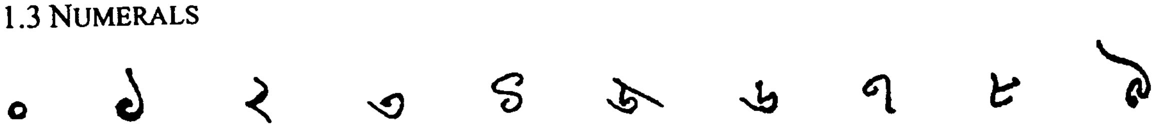


ya ra la va



śa ṣa sa ha

1.3 Numerals



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

2. CONJUNCT CONSONANTS

2.1 CONJUNCTS WITH A FOLLOWING VELAR STOP

2.1.1 ***-k-***



ṅkā *ṅkṛ* *rko* *ṣkri* *ska* *skṛ* *skri*

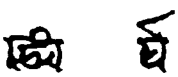
2.1.2 ***-kh-***

2.1.3 ***-g-***



ṅgai *dgu* *dgau* *rggā* *rggau*

2.1.4 ***-gh-***



ṅghi *rgha*

2.2 CONJUNCTS WITH A FOLLOWING PALATAL STOP

2.2.1 ***-c-***



ñca *ñco* *śca*

2.2.2 ***-ch-***

2.2.3 ***-j-***



ñja *rju* *vja*

2.2.4 ***-jh-***



jjha

2.3 CONJUNCTS WITH A FOLLOWING RETROFLEX STOP

2.3.1 *-ṭ-*



ṣṭa *ṣṭā* *ṣṭo*

2.3.2 *-ṭh-*



ṣṭhī *ṣṭhu* *ṣṭhū* *ṣṭhye*

2.3.3 *-ḍ-*



ṇḍa *ṇḍā* *ṇḍi* *ṇḍu*

2.3.4 *-ḍh-*

2.4 CONJUNCTS WITH A FOLLOWING DENTAL STOP

2.4.1 *-t-*



kta *ktu* *ktra* *ntā* *ntu* *ntyo* *ntra* *sti* *stu* *styā* *strā*

2.4.2 *-th-*



ntha *rtha* *rthya* *sthā* *sthi*

2.4.3 *-d-*



nda *ndo* *ndra* *rdde* *rddrāṃ* *vdā* *vde*

2.4.4 ***-dh-***



gdha *gdhā* *ddhau* *ndha* *ndhā* *ndhi* *ndhū* *ndho* *rddha* *vdhi*

2.5 CONJUNCTS WITH A FOLLOWING LABIAL STOP

2.5.1 ***-p-***



tpa *tpā* *lpa* *lpya* *ṣpa* *ṣpra*

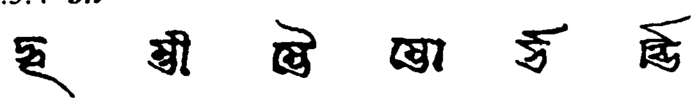
2.5.2 ***-ph-***



sphu

2.5.3 ***-b-*** see 2.7.4

2.5.4 ***-bh-***



dbhū *mbhī* *mbhai* *mbho* *rbha* *rbhi*

2.6 CONJUNCTS WITH A FOLLOWING NASAL

2.6.1 ***-ñ-***



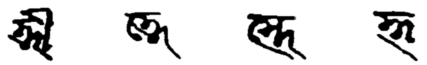
jña

2.6.2 ***-ṇ-***



rṇṇa *rṇṇa* *rṇṇai* *rṇṇye* *ṣṇya*

2.6.3 ***-n-***



tnī *tne* *tsna* *hna*

2.6.4 ***-m-***



kṣma *kṣmī* *ṅma* *tma* *dma* *nmu* *rtma* *rmma* *ṣma* *smā* *smi*

2.7 Conjuncts with a following semi-vowel

2.7.1 *-y-*



kya *kṣya* *khyā* *ghyai* *cya* *jyo* *tya* *tye* *dya* *dyā*



dyu *dhya* *ntyo* *nyu* *nyū* *pya* *bhyu* *mya* *rṇṇye* *ryya*

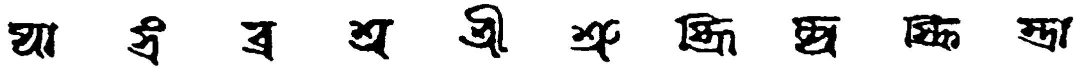


lpya *lya* *vya* *vyu* *śya* *ṣṭhye* *ṣṇya* *ṣya* *styā* *syā*

2.7.2 ***-r-***



ktra *ktrā* *kri* *krī* *ttri* *trā* *tre* *dra* *dhru* *ndra* *pra*



prā *bhraṃ* *vra* *śra* *śrī* *śru* *ṣkri* *ṣpra* *skri* *strā*

2.7.3 ***-l-***



klā *śli* *śle*

2.7.4 -*v*-



kva *gva* *chva* *jva* *tvā* *dva* *dvā* *mva* *rva* *rvva*



lvi *ṣva* *sva* *svi* *hva*

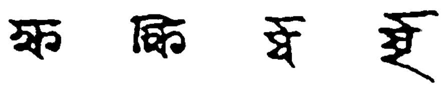
2.8 CONJUNCTS WITH A FOLLOWING SIBILANT

2.8.1 -*ś*-



rśa

2.8.2 -*ṣ*-



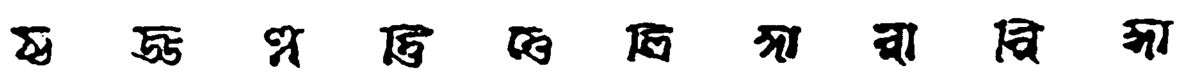
kṣa *kṣi* *rṣa* *rṣū*

2.8.3 -*s*-



tsa *tsna* *psu*

2.9 CONJUNCTS WITH GEMINATES



cca *jja* *ṇṇa* *tti* *tte* *ttri* *ddā* *nnā* *nni* *rggā*



rṇṇa *rṇṇa* *rtta* *rttu* *rmma* *ryya* *rvva* *lla* *lla*

3. Diacritic Vowels

3.1 With -*ā*

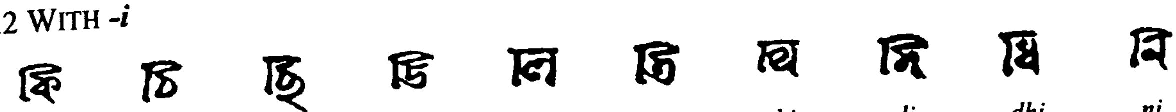


kā *khā* *ghā* *cā* *jā* *ṭā* *ḍā* *ṇā* *thā* *dā*



rā *vā* *śā* *sā* *hā*

3.2 With -*i*

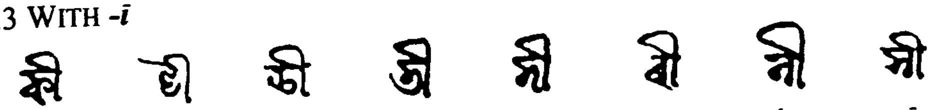


ki *ci* *chi* *ji* *ṇi* *ti* *thi* *di* *dhi* *ni*



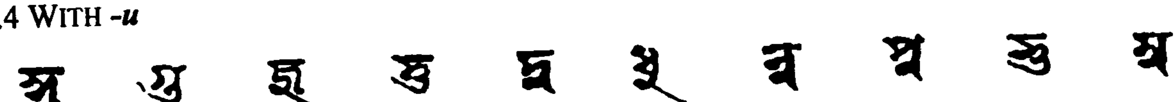
pi *bhi* *vi* *śi* *hi*

3.3 With -*ī*



kī *ṭī* *ḍī* *tī* *dī* *rī* *lī* *sī*

3.4 With -*u*



ku *gu* *ju* *tu* *du* *dhu* *nu* *pu* *bhu* *mu*



yu *ru* *lu* *vu* *śu* *ṣu* *hu*

3.5 With -*ū*



ghū *dhū* *pū* *mū* *rū* *sū* *hū*

3.6 WITH *-ṛ*



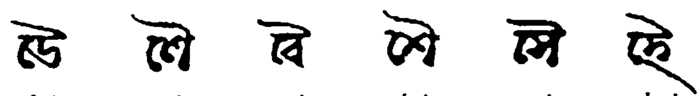
kṛ *gṛ* *jṛ* *tṛ* *dṛ* *mṛ* *vṛ* *hṛ*

3.7 WITH *-e*



ke *te* *de* *ne* *bhe* *me* *ye* *se* *he*

3.8 WITH *-ai*



ḍai *ṇai* *vai* *śai* *sai* *hai*

3.9 WITH *-o*



ko *go* *ṭo* *tho* *do* *no* *yo* *ro* *lo* *śo*

3.10 WITH *-au*



gau *nau* *pau*

4. ANUSVĀRA, VISARGA, AVAGRAHA AND OTHER SYMBOLS



kṣiṃ *kṣyaṃ* *khaṃ* *gaṃ* *cāṃ* *ṇaṃ* *taṃ* *tyāṃ* *tvaṃ* *thaṃ* *dyaṃ*



dhiṃ *nāṃ* *bhraṃ* *yaṃ* *raṃ* *laṃ* *śaṃ* *ṣāṃ* *saṃ* *haṃ* *oṃ*



ḥ avagraha daṇḍa double daṇḍa marker *śrīḥ* | left ornament right ornament

5. SIMILAR LETTERS



6. LETTERS IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

A

1. *a*

Ā

2. *ā*

I

3. *i*

Ī

4. , *ī*

U

5. *u*

Ū

6. *'ū*

Ṛ

7. *ṛ*

E

8. *e*

AI

9. *ai*

O

10. *o*

AU

11. *au*

K

12. *ka*
13. *kā*
14. *ki*
15. *kī*
16. *ku*
17. *kṛ*
18. *ke*
19. *ko*
20. *kta*
21. *ktā*
22. *ktu*
23. *ktra*
24. *ktrā*
25. *kya*
26. *kri*
27. *krī*
28. *klā*
29. *kva*
30. *kṣa*
31. *kṣi*
32. *kṣiṃ*
33. *kṣma*
34. *kṣmī*
35. *kṣya*
36. *kṣyaṃ*

KH

37. *kha*
38. *khaṃ*
39. *khā*
40. *khyā*

G

41. *ga*
42. *gaṃ*
43. *gu*
44. *gṛ*
45. *go*
46. *gau*
47. *gdha*
48. *gdhā*
49. *gva*

GH

50. *gha*
51. *ghā*
52. *ghū*
53. *ghyai*

Ṅ

54. *'ṅa*
55. *ṅkā*
56. *ṅkṛ*
57. *ṅga*
58. *ṅgai*
59. *ṅghi*
60. *ṅma*

C

61. *ca*
62. *cā*
63. *cāṃ*
64. *ci*
65. *cca*
66. *cya*
67. *cyu*

CH

68. *cha*
69. *chi*
70. *chva*

J

71. *ja*
72. *jā*
73. *ji*
74. *ju*
75. *jṛ*
76. *jja*
77. *jjha*
78. *jña*
79. *jyo*
80. *jva*

JH

81. *jha*

Ñ

82. *'ña*
83. *ñca*
84. *nco*
85. *ñja*

Ṭ

86. *ṭa*
87. *ṭā*
88. *ṭī*
89. *ṭo*

ṬH

90. *ṭha*

Ḍ

91. *ḍa*
92. *ḍā*
93. *ḍī*
94. *ḍai*

ḌH

95. *ḍha*

Ṇ

96. *ṇa*
97. *ṇaṃ*
98. *ṇā*
99. *ṇi*
100. *ṇai*
101. *ṇḍa*
102. *ṇḍā*
103. *ṇḍi*
104. *ṇḍu*
105. *ṇṇa*

T

106. *ta*
107. *taṃ*
108. *ti*
109. *tī*
110. *tu*
111. *tṛ*
112. *te*
113. *tti*
114. *tte*
115. *ttri*
116. *tnī*
117. *tne*
118. *tpa*
119. *tpā*
120. *tma*
121. *tya*
122. *tyāṃ*
123. *tyu*
124. *tye*
125. *trā*
126. *tre*
127. *tvaṃ*
128. *tvā*
129. *tsa*
130. *tsna*

TH

131. *tha*
132. *thaṃ*
133. *thā*
134. *thi*
135. *tho*

D

136. *da*
137. *dā*
138. *di*
139. *dī*
140. *du*
141. *dṛ*
142. *de*
143. *do*
144. *dgu*
145. *dgau*
146. *ddā*
147. *ddhau*
148. *dbhū*
149. *dma*
150. *dya*
151. *dyaṃ*
152. *dyā*
153. *dyu*
154. *dra*
155. *dva*
156. *dvā*

DH

157. *dha*
158. *dhā*
159. *dhi*
160. *dhiṃ*
161. *dhu*
162. *dhū*
163. *dhai*
164. *dhya*
165. *dhru*

N

166. *na*
167. *nāṃ*
168. *ni*
169. *nu*
170. *ne*
171. *no*
172. *nau*
173. *ntā*

174. *ntu*
175. *ntyo*
176. *ntra*
177. *ntha*
178. *nda*
179. *ndo*
180. *ndra*
181. *ndha*
182. *ndhā*
183. *ndhi*
184. *ndhū*
185. *ndho*
186. *nnā*
187. *nni*
188. *nmu*
189. *nyu*
190. *nyū*

P

191. *pa*
192. *pi*
193. *pu*
194. *pū*
195. *pau*
196. *pya*
197. *pra*
198. *prā*
199. *psu*

PH

200. *pha*

B SEE **V**

BH

201. *bha*
202. *bhi*
203. *bhu*
204. *bhe*
205. *bhyu*
206. *bhraṃ*

M

207. *ma*
208. *mā*
209. , *mu*
210. *mū*
211. *mṛ*
212. *me*
213. *mbhī*
214. *mbhai*
215. *mbho*
216. *mya*
217. *mva*

Y

218. *ya*
219. *yaṃ*
220. *yu*
221. *ye*
222. *yo*

R

223. *ra*
224. *raṃ*
225. *rā*
226. *rī*
227. *ru*
228. *rū*
229. *ro*
230. *rko*
231. *rggā*
232. *rggau*
233. *rgha*
234. *rju*
235. , *rṇṇa*
236. *rṇṇai*
237. *rṇṇye*
238. *rtta*
239. *rttu*
240. *rtma*
241. *rtha*
242. *rthya*
243. *rdde*
244. *rddrāṃ*
245. *rddha*
246. *rbha*
247. *rbhi*
248. *rmma*
249. *ryya*
250. *rva*
251. *rvva*
252. *rśa*
253. *rṣa*
254. *rṣū*

L

255. , *la*
256. *laṃ*
257. *lī*
258. *lu*
259. *lo*
260. *lpa*
261. *lpya*
262. *lya*
263. , *lla*
264. *lvi*

V

265. *va*
266. *vā*
267. *vi*
268. *vu*
269. *vṛ*

270. *vai*
271. *vja*
272. *vdā*
273. *vde*
274. *vdhi*
275. *vya*
276. *vyu*
277. *vra*

Ś

278. , *śa*
279. *śaṃ*
280. *śā*
281. *śi*
282. *śu*
283. *śai*
284. *śo*
285. *śca*
286. *śya*
287. *śra*
288. *śrī*
289. *śru*
290. *śli*
291. *śle*

Ṣ

292. *ṣa*
293. *ṣāṃ*
294. *ṣu*
295. *ṣkri*
296. *ṣṭa*
297. *ṣṭā*
298. *ṣṭo*
299. *ṣṭhī*
300. *ṣṭhu*
301. *ṣṭhū*
302. *ṣṭhye*
303. *ṣṇya*
304. *ṣpa*
305. *ṣpra*
306. *ṣma*
307. *ṣya*
308. *ṣva*

S

309. *sa*
310. *saṃ*
311. *sā*
312. *sī*
313. *su*
314. *sū*
315. *se*
316. *sai*
317. *ska*
318. *skṛ*
319. *skri*
320. *sti*
321. *stu*
322. *styā*
323. *strā*
324. *sthā*
325. *sthi*
326. *sphu*
327. *smā*
328. *smi*
329. *syā*
330. *sva*
331. *svi*

H

332. *ha*
333. *haṃ*
334. *hā*
335. *hi*
336. *hu*
337. *hū*
338. *hṛ*
339. *he*
340. *hai*
341. *hna*
342. *hva*

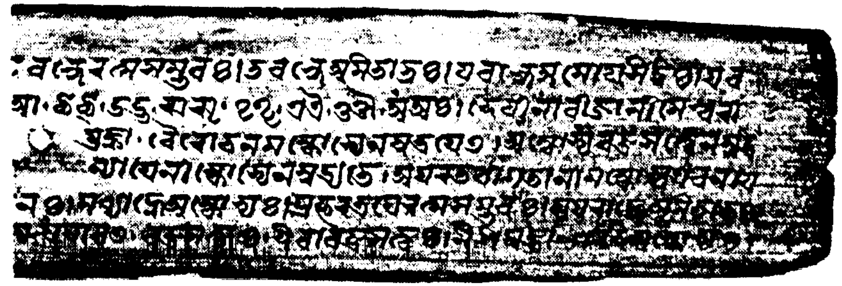
OTHER SYMBOLS

343. *oṃ*
344. *ḥ*
345. avagraha
346. daṇḍa
347. d. daṇḍa
348. marker
349. *śrīḥ*
350.
351.

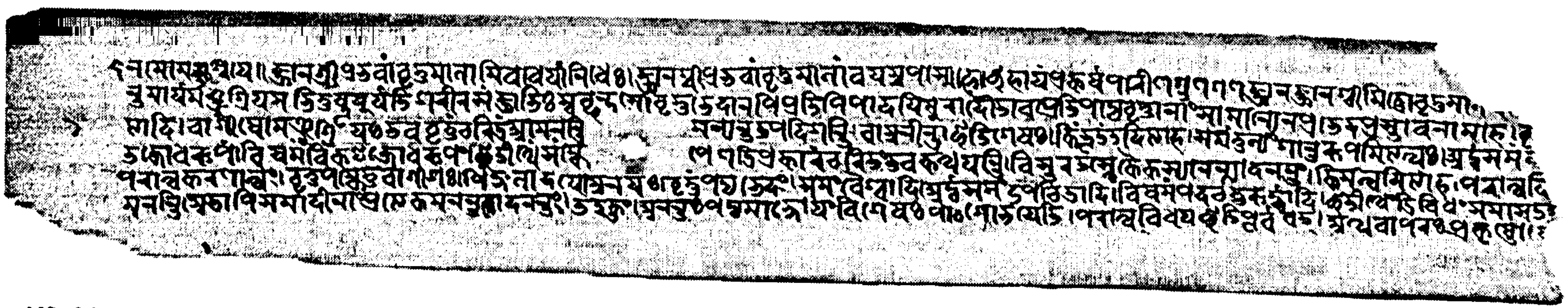
Appendix I

Samples of Bengali Writing

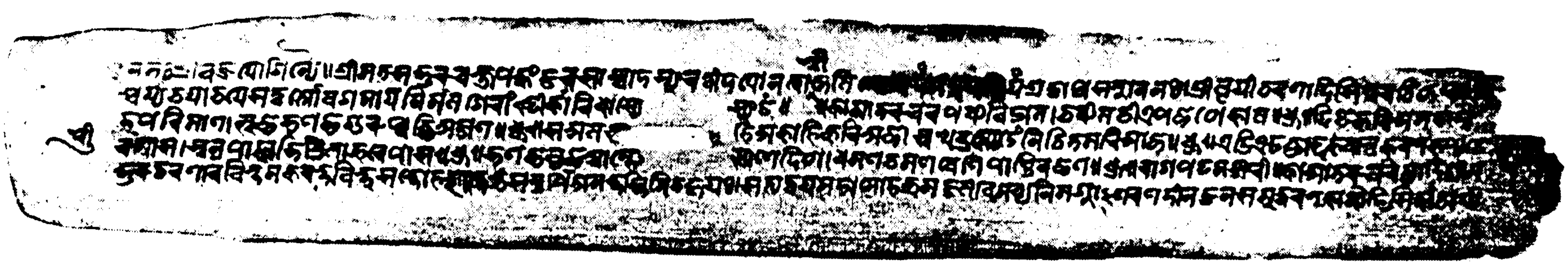
MS of the *Pañcākāra*
Cambridge MS. Add. 1464; fol. 5a
Date: 1198 AD
Reproduced from Bendall 1883, plate II.4



MS of the *Vṛttamālāstutivivṛti*
NGMPP B 29/31; fol. 1b
Date: 13th – 14th cent.



MS of the *Caryāgītikośa*
National Archives, Kathmandu; fol. 1b
Date: late 13th – early 15th cent.
Reproduced from Sen 1977, p. 2

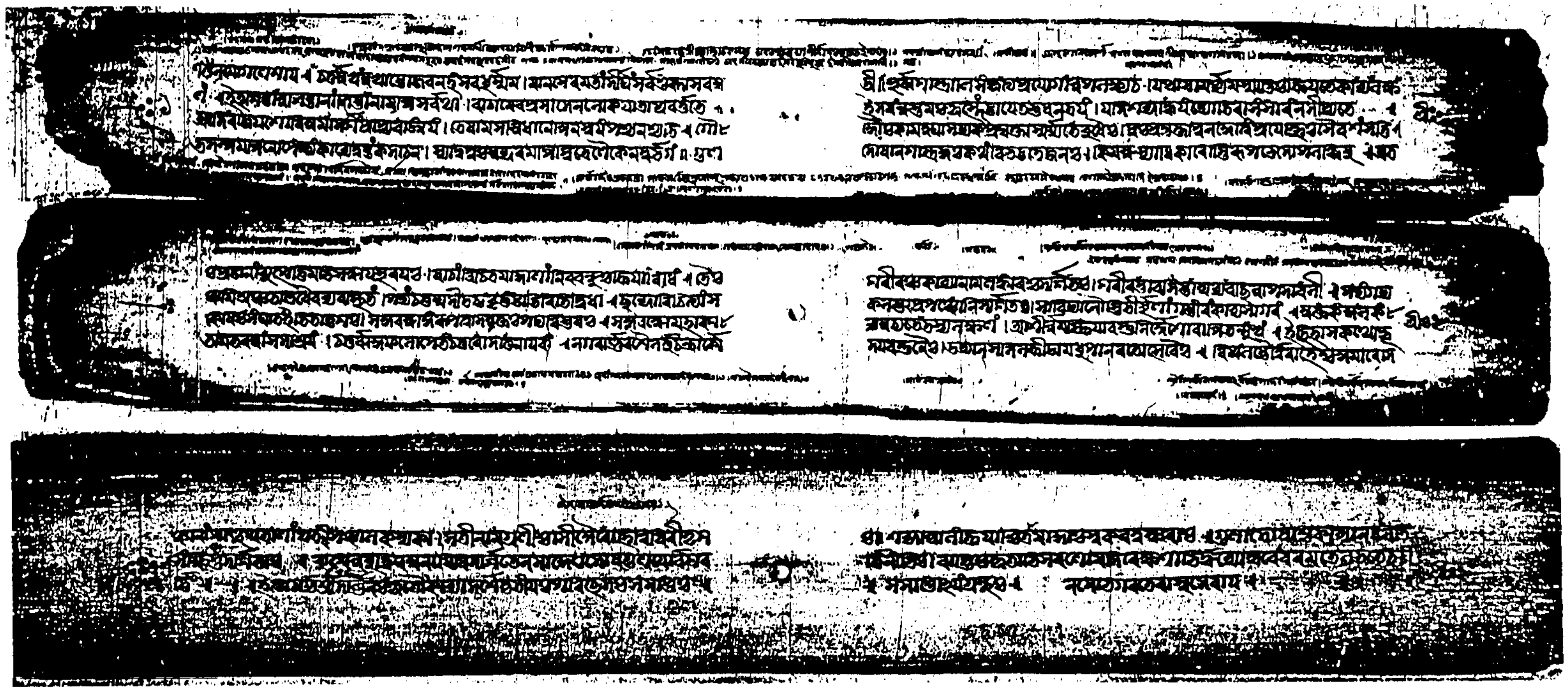


MS of the *Kāvyādarśa*
National Archives, Kathmandu; fols. 1b–2a, 43b
Date: late 14th cent. – first half of the 15th cent.

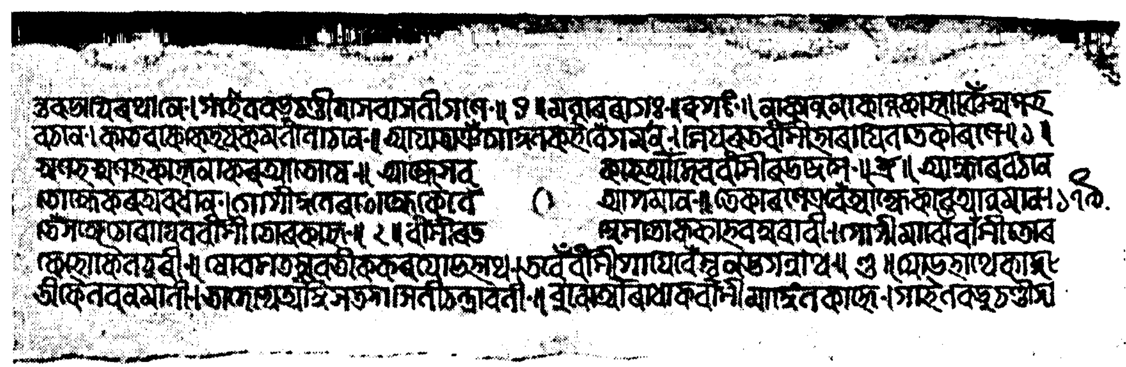
fol. 1b
KĀ 1.1-9

fol. 2a
KĀ 1.9-17

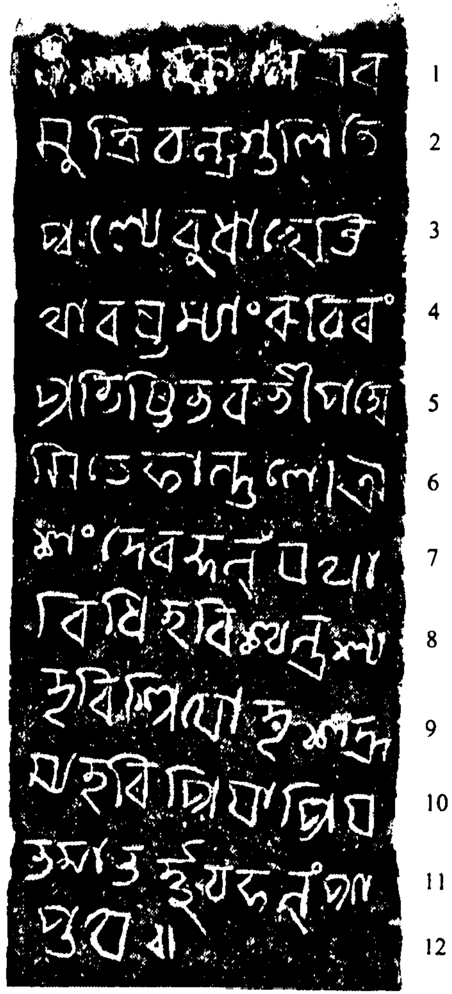
fol. 43b
KĀ 3.185-187



MS of the *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtana*
Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣad MS; fol. 179b
Date: late 15th–early 16th cent.
Reproduced from BANERJI 1919, plate VIII



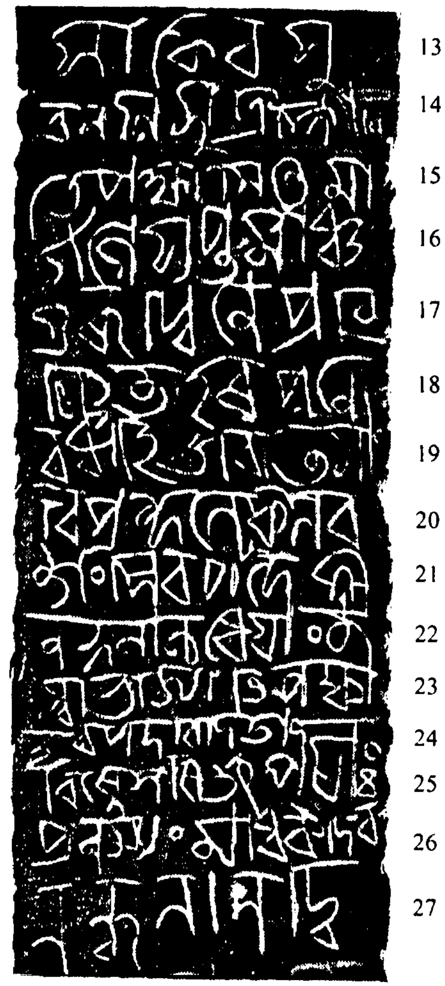
JRASBL, II, 1936. PLATE 4.



Inscription in Bengali script (12 lines) on the right door-jamb of Gaṇeśa temple, No. I (1′ 6″ × 0′ 7″) at Barakar (Begunia), Dt. Burdwan. *Top.*

First inscription from Barākar
Date: 18th February, 1461 AD
Reproduced from CHAKRAVARTI 1936, plate 4

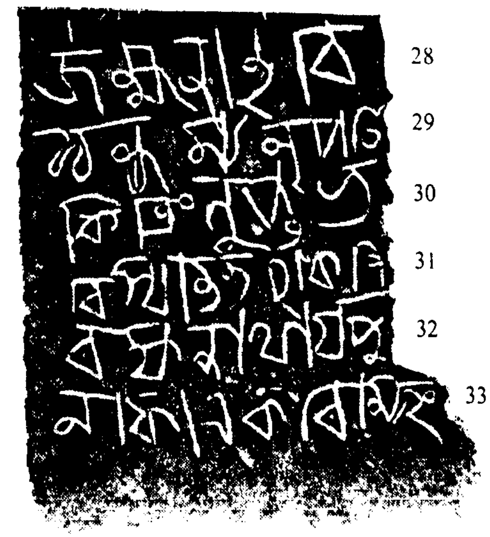
JRASBL, II, 1936. PLATE 5.



Inscription in Bengali script (21 lines of which 15 lines are on this plate, and 6 on Plate 6) on the right door-jamb of Gaṇeśa temple, No. I (2′ 3″ × 0′ 7″) at Barakar (Begunia), Dt. Burdwan. *Bottom.*

Second inscription from Barākar
Date: 15th November, 1545 AD
Reproduced from CHAKRAVARTI 1936, plates 5–6

JRASBL, II, 1936. PLATE 6.



Lower Part of Plate 5.

Appendix II

MODERN BENGALI SCRIPT

1. INITIAL VOWELS

অ	আ	ই	ঈ	উ	ঊ	ঋ	এ	ঐ	ও	ঔ
a	*ā*	*i*	*ī*	*u*	*ū*	*ṛ*	*e*	*ai*	*o*	*au*

2. CONSONANTS

ক	খ	গ	ঘ	ঙ
ka	*kha*	*ga*	*gha*	*ṅa*
চ	ছ	জ	ঝ	ঞ
ca	*cha*	*ja*	*jha*	*ña*
ট	ঠ	ড	ঢ	ণ
ṭa	*ṭha*	*ḍa*	*ḍha*	*ṇa*
ত	থ	দ	ধ	ন
ta	*tha*	*da*	*dha*	*na*
প	ফ	ব	ভ	ম
pa	*pha*	*ba*	*bha*	*ma*

য	র	ল
ya	*ra*	*la*

শ	ষ	স	হ
śa	*ṣa*	*sa*	*ha*

3. NUMERALS

০	১	২	৩	৪	৫	৬	৭	৮	৯
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

ABBREVIATIONS

BAR I	first inscription from Barākar, 1461 AD
BAR II	second inscription from Barākar, 1545 AD
BSP	Buddhisāgara PARĀJULI: *Bṛhatsūcīpatram*
fol./fols.	folio/folios
KY	the era of the Kaliyuga
MS/MSS	manuscript/manuscripts
MS AK	manuscript of the *Amarakośa*
MS BC	manuscript of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, 1435 AD
MS CG	manuscript of the *Caryāgītikośa*
MS KĀ	manuscript of the *Kāvyādarśa*
MS P	manuscript of the *Pañcākāra*, 1198 AD
MS ŚKK	manuscript of the *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtana*
MS VMS	manuscript of the *Vṛttamālāstutivivṛti*
NGMPP	Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project
SSP	Buddhisāgara PARĀJULI: *Saṃkṣiptasūcīpatram*

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